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1899

III
Armstrong

NOTICES OF THE WAR OF 1812.

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NOTICES

OF

THE WAR OF 1812.

BY JOHN ARMSTRONG.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

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PREFACE.

"WERE nations to review in peace their motives for having made war, with the means they employed, and the method by which they conducted it, they would in general find much to blame in a moral as well as a military view; the conviction of the wrongs they did, and the blunders they committed, might, on another and similar occasion, improve both their ethics and their tactics, and make them, at once, better men and abler soldiers; but as nations cannot be brought together, it rests with governments to perform this duty of self-examination; when, if they omit it, the task devolves on the historian."

MABBY.

NOTICES OF THE WAR OF 1812.

CHAPTER I.

Causes of the War.—Declaration of War by the United States.—Opposition to the measure.—Its character and effects.

THE Treaty of Paris of 1783, by which Great Britain acknowledged "the freedom, sovereignty, and independence of the United States," was, on the part of the former, virtually a truce, not a pacification; a temporary and reluctant sacrifice of national pride to national interest; not a frank and honest adjustment of differences, seeking no cause, nor indulging any disposition, to renew the controversy. Indeed, so little careful was this power to conceal, or even to dissemble her temper and policy on this subject, that the first American minister accredited to her court, had scarcely passed the threshold of the palace, when he discovered, that a spirit of unextinguished animosity towards the United States, pervaded alike her councils and her conduct.[1] Nor was it the effect of longer residence, or more intimate acquaintance, to modify, much less to efface this first impression. Every overture on

[1] Appendix, No. 1.

his part, made with a view of placing the diplomatic relations of the two countries on a fair and friendly footing, was disregarded; the north-western, and other military posts, though confessedly within the limits of the United States, were forcibly retained;[1] the Indian nations in alliance with Great Britain, were openly instigated to a renewal of hostilities; and when at last, this diabolical purpose was accomplished, as if to leave no room for doubting her instrumentality in the case, she was found extending her territorial encroachments, and taking a new and formidable position on the Miami of the Lake; whence, during three campaigns, she supplied the wants, and prompted the attacks of these savage tribes.[2]

Checked by Wayne's victory in 1794, in this plan of desolating the west, she next employed herself in attempting to corrupt the east; and in 1809, mistaking the freedom of political discussion, for a spirit of revolt, despatched a confidential agent to Boston, with authority to mature the terms on which that section of the country would separate from the Union, and reconnect itself with the British Empire. The failure, no less than the atrocity of this project, forbade its acknowledgment; but though officially disavowed, the number and character of

[1] The posts retained contrary to treaty, were Michilimackinac, Detroit, Niagara, Oswegotché, Point au Fer, and Dutchman's Point.

[2] St. Clair's Narrative of the campaign of 1791, and Lord Dorchester's Speech to the Indians, in 1794. See, also, Washington's letter to Jay, of the 30th of August of the same year, Appendix, No. 3.

the documents produced in support of the charge, leave no doubt of its validity.[1]

It cannot be supposed that the spirit of hostility, thus manifested on the land, would be slow in showing itself on the ocean. Having in 1793, become a party to the coalition against republican France,[2] she adopted a policy, which sought at once to distress and impoverish her enemy and enrich herself, at the expense of neutral commerce; and accordingly, on the 8th of June of that year, issued an order for capturing and carrying into British ports, "all vessels laden wholly or in part with corn, flour, or meal, and destined to France, or to other countries, if occupied by the arms of that nation."

Offensive as this measure could not fail to be, its vexations and injuries were nearly forgotten, in the greater mischief and malignity which characterized that of the 6th of November of the same year; and which, by instructions secretly communicated to her citizens, subjected "to capture and adjudication, all vessels laden with the produce of any French colony, or with supplies for such colony"—a measure, which in the opinion of a careful inqui er and competent judge, "annihilated at a blow, a large portion of the commerce of the United States."[3] But however great, in this case, the loss to us, or the profit

1 Appendix, No. 4.

2 The basis of the several coalitions against France, was the conference at Mantua in 1791; to which the King of England was a party, as elector of Hanover.

3 Dallas's exposition of the causes and character of the late war.

to her, there was soon superadded another measure, which interdicted all neutral commerce, not only with ports blockaded by forces sufficient for the purpose, (which the laws of war would not have forbidden) but with places where no force whatever existed; and even with whole coasts of territory, which her naval means, if acting in concert, would have been incompetent to blockade. Still, her abuse of power did not stop here; it was not enough that she thus outraged our rights on the ocean; the bosoms of our bays, the mouths of our rivers and even the wharves of our harbors, were made the theatres of the most flagitious abuse; and, as if determined to leave no cause of provocation untried, the *personal* rights of our seamen were invaded; and men, owing her no allegiance, nor having any connexion with her policy or arms, were forcibly siezed, dragged on board her ships of war and made to fight her battles, under the scourge of tyrants and slaves, with whom submission, whether right or wrong, forms the whole duty of man.[1]

Evils of such magnitude and continuance, could not fail to produce a high degree of excitement in the nation, and much of a correspondent feeling on the part of the government; but though three successive administrations saw in the conduct of Great Britain, sufficient cause of war, all doubted the expediency of acting upon it. Barely recovered from the debility, resulting from the defects of their

[1] Official letters of Mr. King while Minister at London.

first Federal compact, and but just entered on the experiment of another of more efficient character, *forbearance* was adopted as a principle, and means simply diplomatic prescribed, as those alone which could be employed with safety and success. Unfortunately, this estimate of their value was deceptive, and the event showed, that with a nation like Great Britain, which makes her own interest and convenience the governing rules of her conduct, persuasion, admonition, remonstrance, argument, and even concession, are alike unavailing. All these elements of diplomacy were frequently and faithfully employed, but without other effect than that of multiplying and augmenting the evils they were intended to mitigate or remove; the appetite of the aggressor grew on what it fed; her insolence increased with her power, and the violation of one right, was made to justify that of another; when at last, disdaining longer to discuss wrongs she had no intention to redress, she officially announced—that "farther negotiation was inadmissible."[1]

Having thus lost the respect of her adversary, it but remained for the United States to decide, whether she would preserve her own? On this question, she could not hesitate long or seriously; and accordingly, on the 18th of June, 1812, declared war against the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland and their dependancies.

It must not however be dissembled, that this act,

[1] Dallas's Exposition.

though forced upon the government by the long-continued and increasing injustice of England, received from the community, a less general support, than might have been expected from the purity of the motives in which it originated, or the nature and extent of the evils it was intended to redress. The habitual opponents of the administration, believing the circumstances of the times furnished a favorable opportunity for attempting the recovery of the political ascendency they had lost, hastened to institute a system of indiscriminate opposition; directed as well against measures merely preparatory for war, as against those which were in themselves acts of war. In this headlong career, the fiscal operations of the government were opposed; the recruiting service discountenanced; the militia made insubordinate, and even the constitutional authority of the President to organize their masses and direct their services within the states respectively, denied and resisted. We need hardly add, that an opposition, thus active and lawless, could not fail to be mischievous, and became, as will be seen in the progress of our story, the source of both calamity and disgrace to the nation.[1]

[1] Appendix, No. 5.

CHAPTER II.

Hull's Expedition.—Loss of Michilimakinac.—Surrender of Detroit, the Michigan Territory, and the Army.

Among the measures of precaution, taken by the Government of the United States, previously to their declaration of war,[1] was that "of placing within the Michigan Territory, a force that should be competent to the defence of the north-western frontier against Indian hostility; and which, in the event of a rupture with Great Britain, would enable the United States to obtain the command of Lake Erie; and with it, the means of more easily co-operating with such other corps, as might be destined to the invasion of the Canadas."[2] The troops assigned to this service, amounting to two thousand men of all arms,[3] were placed under the command of Brigadier-General Hull, then Governor of the Michigan

1 The principal of these were, an Act laying an embargo on shipping—a second, authorizing a detachment of one hundred thousand militia—a third, for increasing the regular army—a fourth, for the acceptance of volunteers—and a fifth, for borrowing money on public account.

2 President Madison's Message to Congress, of Nov. 4th, 1812.

3 Three companies of the first United States regiment of Artillery; the fourth, and part of the first regiment of Infantry; three regiments of Ohio volunteers; the Michigan militia and one company of Rangers.

Territory; and formerly an officer, not without distinction, in the war of the revolution.

This General, after giving the necessary attention to the equipment and subsistence of his corps,[1] began his march from Dayton, a frontier town in the State of Ohio, on the first day of June, 1812. Though unencumbered with artillery, and in no way impeded by an enemy, his progress was unavoidably slow; from the necessity of opening roads, making bridges and constructing blockhouses, for the better security of his rear, and of the supplies and reinforcements moving upon it. It was not, therefore, until the 30th of the month, that he was enabled to reach the Miami of the Lake; where, under an admonition, recently received from the War Department, "to quicken his movements," he determined to avail himself of the means of navigation which now offered, for the more rapid and economical transportation of his baggage, stores, sick and convalescent.[2] Embarking these, accordingly, on board of the Cayahoga Packet, they were despatched for Detroit; while the army, with the same destination, resumed its march by land.

The day following this transaction, the General

1 Hull asserts, that he found the Ohio volunteers deficient in arms, equipment and clothing; and even unprovided with either contract, or commissariat, for the supply of their food.—*Hull's Memoirs.*

2 Colonel McArthur admonished the General against this measure, on the presumption that war was already declared, and furnished strong evidence of the fact; but with so little effect, that the General availed himself of the packet to forward, even "the instructions of his government and the returns of his army."

received the first official notice of the declaration of war; and on reaching the river Raisin, was made acquainted with the fate of his detachment; which, in attempting to pass the British post of Malden, had been attacked and captured, "by a British subaltern and six men, in a small and open boat."

The effect of this disaster on General Hull, was not such as might have been expected from long military service, or high military character; and probably produced the first doubts that existed of his capacity as a leader. Instead of exciting to increased spirit and exertion, which would soon have compensated for the loss and atoned for the disgrace so unexpectedly incurred, he unfortunately saw it only in the light of an evil omen, and precursor of an attack, fatal alike to the objects and agents of the expedition; and accordingly employed himself in imagining and practising devices to avoid a battle,[1] which all circumstances—time, place and relative strength—made it his duty to seek. Nor were his stratagems on this occasion unavailing; the enemy saw and respected his strength, and permitted him to reach Detroit, without molestation or menace.

Finding himself now vested with an authority to invade the Canadas, "if consistent with the safety of his own posts," and not having, as he believed, any thing to fear on their account, he on the 12th of July crossed the river Detroit and encamped at

1 Hull's Memoirs, p. 39.

Sandwich, with the professed object of marching directly upon Malden—a measure, recommended by many considerations; but more particularly by the fact, that from the local position of the fort, (nearly twenty miles in the rear of Detroit) its garrison had the power of destroying or obstructing all supplies coming from the United States, unless protected by a force superior to itself.

In prosecution of this important object, the General began by issuing a proclamation addressed as well to the hopes, as to the fears of the Canadian colonists; and vaunting, in an especial manner, the possession of a force "equal to the purpose of either protection or punishment." Nor did the party addressed, put a different estimate on its power of doing good or evil—"all opposition seemed to fall before it; one month it remained in the country, and was fed from its resources. In different directions, detachments penetrated sixty miles into the settled parts of the province, and the inhabitants seemed satisfied with the change of situation which appeared to be taking place. The militia at Amherstburg were daily deserting, and the whole country under the control of the army, asking for protection—while the Indians generally, appeared to be neutralized and determined to take no part in the controversy."[1]

If such was the effect of the mere appearance of the American army within the limits of Canada,

[1] Hull's official letter to the War Department, 27th August, 1812.

what might not have been expected from a prompt, steady and well-directed application of its powers? Malden was but eighteen miles from Sandwich; the road between the two, wholly unobstructed; and what at the former was called a fortification, utterly unworthy of the name.[1] Nor was the garrison more formidable than the work it occupied; consisting only of one hundred regular troops, and four hundred disaffected militia and neutralized Indians. Instead, however, of availing himself of circumstances thus auspicious, and putting into his conduct that vigor and intelligence, which always deserve success and often command it, the General unfortunately took council only from his fears, and for the first time discovered, that "he had neither cannon nor howitzers of large calibre, fit to travel; and that without arms of this description, it would be unsafe to advance." Artificers were therefore set to work to supply the deficiency, and at the end of three weeks, two twenty-four pounders and three howitzers, were put upon wheels strong enough to carry them.[2]

It may be reasonably supposed that this long interval had not been permitted to escape, without

1 Hull's trial; Cass and Miller's testimony.

2 General Brock's estimate of the use of heavy cannon in breaching earthern walls and cedar pickets, was very different. In approaching Detroit, a work of much more strength than Malden, he would not encumber his movements with guns of larger calibre than six and three pounders. Yet to Brock's knowledge of his trade, General Hull bears willing testimony.

some movements calculated to try the strength and temper of the enemy; and more particularly, that the approaches to his position, as well as the position itself, had been thoroughly reconnoitred and ascertained. Nothing, however, of this character was either meditated or executed, if we except two or three small and isolated detachments, sent as far as the river Canard; but without any sustaining corps, to enable them to hold what they gained, if found to be useful; nor even any instruction to do so, if practicable, by the means they possessed. Of these, the detachment commanded by Colonels Cass and Miller is most worthy of notice.

On approaching the river (a narrow but deep stream four miles from Malden) a British picket was found in possession of the bridge, and apparently determined to hold it. After a short trial of strength, the position was turned and the picket driven back upon the fort, whither the fugitives carried their panic along with them, "creating in the garrison much alarm and confusion"—a state of things which continued to exist until it was discovered that the detachment, instead of being (as had been imagined) the precursor of an army, was merely a reconnoitring party, ignorant of the value of the position it had gained, or not instructed and prepared to maintain it.[1]

If the effects of this experiment on the enemy, appear to be extraordinary and without sufficient

[1] Hull's trial; Forbish's testimony.

cause, how much more so must be considered those which it produced on the American commander? When the success of the party in taking the bridge and driving in the picket, was reported by Colonels Cass and Miller, they did not fail to report also the importance of the acquisition they had made to the future objects of the campaign; and entreated, that if any circumstances unknown to them, made it inexpedient or improper to move the army to this new and important position, they might themselves be permitted to hold it and be sustained in doing so, by occasional or permanent reinforcements and supplies. On this expression of facts and opinions, which should have excited only respect for those who had given them, the General yielded to a paroxysm of ill-temper and obstinacy; criminated the attack made on the enemy, as a breach of orders; rejected the advice offered to him in all its parts, and peremptorily commanded the immediate return of the detachment. Nor could any modification of this order be obtained, but on condition that Colonels Cass and Miller would take upon themselves the whole responsibility of the measure, without any corresponding obligation on the part of the General to supply the means necessary to its execution—a condition, to which he well knew, no prudent officer would yield his assent.[1]

[1] Hull's trial. Colonel Miller's testimony.—"Witness mentioned to Colonel Cass and they agreed, that as they had not the disposition of the whole force, they should not take the responsibility." See also the testimony of Quartermaster-General Taylor.

Such want of knowledge, of judgment and of enterprise, could not be long concealed by any devices; and had now become so flagrant and alarming, that even the General appeared to be touched by a desire of redeeming what he had lost. He regretted that a blow had not been already struck; and declared himself pledged to lead the army promptly and directly to Malden.[1] The ammunition was accordingly placed in wagons; the cannon, on floating batteries; and every other requisite for the attack prepared, when to the grief and disappointment of all, the plan was abandoned, the encampment raised, and the army, with the exception of a small detachment of one hundred and fifty men, recrossed in the night of the 7th of August, to the town and fort of Detroit!

While the American commander was thus depressing the spirit of his own army, raising that of his enemy, taking from the savages every motive for longer inaction, and entirely destroying the confidence reposed in his promises by the Canadian colonists, his adversary (General Brock) was pursuing a system, which, in all respects, tended directly to augment and confirm these effects. Apprised, as early as the 26th of June, of the declaration of war,[2] he hastened to transmit the information to his outposts; and without waiting the instructions of Sir George Provost, suggested to the commandant

1 Colonel Cass's letter to the Secretary of War, of the 10th September, 1812.

2 Christie's Memoir of the late war in the Canadas.

of St. Joseph's, an immediate attack on Fort Michilimackinac, as the best mode of defending his own.

Though Captain Roberts, the officer to whom this suggestion was made, found himself ill-prepared for an enterprise of such moment; yet entering fully into the views of his commander, and being cordially supported by the agents of the two western fur-companies, he in the short space of eight days, organized a force, naval and military, with which on the 17th of July he made the experiment; and (it may be safely presumed, as much to his surprise, as entirely to his satisfaction) found the commanding officer not only unprepared for the attack, but ignorant of the declaration of war, and not unwilling to surrender his post, without even the ceremony of a refusal.[1]

Having thus easily and cheaply succeeded in wresting from the United States their most important western position, the British General now conceived a project of yet more contemptuous daring; having for its object, not merely the safety of Malden and the expulsion of the American army from Canada, but the pursuit and capture of this very army, within its own territorial limits and defences. As

[1] This surrender, to say the least of it, was precipitate. Some experiment of the enemy's power to take the fort, was due to the American flag and ought to have been made; and the more so, as the result would probably have shown, that an investing corps, composed of *thirty* regulars and a rabble of engagés and savages, with two old rusty iron guns of small calibre, was much less formidable than had been imagined.

a first step in this new career, he superseded Colonel St. George in the command of the district, and substituted for him Colonel Proctor. This officer, who arrived at Malden on the 29th of July, brought with him no important accession to the number of the garrison;[1] but, what was justly considered as even more necessary,—a competent knowledge of his profession, a thorough acquaintance with the views, and a ready submission to the authority of his chief. With such qualifications it is not to be supposed that he would be slow in appreciating the advantages to be derived from the position of the fort in which he commanded; the concentrated state of the force it contained, and the naval means given him to employ and to second this. He accordingly determined to avail himself of the swamps and defiles on the American side of the Detroit; and by thus seizing the key of his adversary's resources, not merely recall him from Canada, but literally compel him to fight for his daily bread, or surrender at discretion. Nor had he long to wait for an occasion, on which to test the value of the plan he had adopted.

Three days before the retreat of the American army from Canada, General Hull, who had hitherto shown great indifference to the state of his communications,[2] consented to the march of a detach-

[1] "Ten or twelve men." Hull's trial; Gooding's testimony.

[2] "The Colonels of the Ohio militia applied for leave to take a detachment and open a communication with Brush, and bring the provisions in safety to Detroit; but the General refused to grant the request and

ment, as a guard to the mail and additional convoy to a quantity of flour and a number of cattle, destined for the use of the army, which the policy, adopted by Proctor and already detailed, had stopped at the river Raisin. With that infatuation, however, which marked so much of his public conduct, and entirely forgetting the panic he had himself suffered in passing the defiles of Maguago and Brownstown, on the preceding 4th of July, (though then at the head of an army,) he perversely limited the number of the detachment to two hundred men.[1] This small body, composed of volunteers and militia, and marching with that want of circumspection which so often occurs in the movements of troops of this description, fell into an ambuscade prepared for them near Brownstown, and were immediately beaten and dispersed; with the loss of four captains, two subalterns, sixty privates and the public mail, of which they had been the escort. Major Van Horne, the commanding officer, did what was possible, to lessen the loss and prevent the disorder of the retreat; and thus endeavored to atone for the error he had committed, in disregarding the information previously given him, of the strength and position of the enemy; and of

appeared indifferent about the fate of the Captain and the provisions. On the 6th, the Colonels applied for five hundred men to bury the killed (in Van Horne's affair,) and to open the communication with Brush; but the General refusing to let them take more than one hundred, and this being a number much too small, the project was abandoned."—*McAffee's History of the War in the West.*

[1] Hull's trial; McArthur's testimony.

which, had a proper use been made, the misfortune might have been easily and entirely avoided.[1]

To fulfil the intention of this unsuccessful and ill-conducted enterprise, the importance of which, (now that the army had recrossed the Detroit and could no longer live on the resources of the enemy,) became every moment more obvious and urgent, a second detachment was ordered, and the command assigned to Lieutenant-Colonel Miller of the fourth United States regiment of infantry. But, as in the former case, the General had not become wise by the experience of others, so in this, he continued to be ignorant in despite of his own. Disregarding the admonition, so abundantly furnished by the disaster and disgrace incurred on the 5th, and entirely overlooking the fact, that his adversary having now nothing to fear with regard to Malden, was at all times in a condition to repeat the lesson with his whole force, if deemed necessary,—he pertinaciously refused to extend the corps beyond five hundred combatants; and would have hazarded these without the protection of a single piece of artillery, had not Colonel Miller insisted upon taking with him, one six-pounder and one five and a half inch howitzer.[2]

1 "After passing the Maguago villages, a Frenchman informed Major Van Horne, that three or four hundred Indians and some British, were lying in ambush near Brownstown, for the purpose of intercepting the party. Not sufficiently respecting the information, the Major marched on."—*McAffee's History.*

2 Dalliba's Narrative.

The detachment beginning its march on the 8th of August, and being conducted with the necessary attention and skill, suffered no serious interruption from the enemy, until the afternoon of the 9th; when on entering a wood near Brownstown, the advanced guard, commanded by Captain Snelling, found itself within pistol-shot of a long and hostile line, covered in front by a breastwork of logs and brushwood, and strongly flanked by the Detroit on one side, and a succession of swamps and thickets on the other. A heavy and destructive fire now opened on Snelling, who sustained and returned it with his usual gallantry, until Colonel Miller (by promptly converting his order of march into an order of battle) was enabled to interpose his front line. It was in executing this manœuvre, that finding himself both outflanked and outnumbered, and perceiving many of his men to fall and some to waver, while little if any impression was made on the covered ranks of the enemy, this distinguished officer determined to bring the contest to the decision of the bayonet. The execution of this purpose was not less rapid than its conception was judicious; the order to charge was received with loud and repeated huzzas; the breastwork was instantaneously mounted and passed, and the centre and left of the enemy, (composed of British regulars and Canadian militia,) not merely beaten, but decidedly routed.[1]

[1] "This rout continued for a mile, when coming into a piece of open ground, they endeavored to form, but on the approach of the Americans, again broke and fled into the woods."—*Dalliba's Narrative.*

Tecumseh, who at the head of what remained of his tribe formed the left of the British line, was more difficult to move. Apparently unaffected by the fate of his ally, he continued the contest with great vigor; and when compelled to abandon the breastwork, withdrew to the neighboring thickets, took new and strong positions, and for a moment rendered it doubtful, whether, after all, the battle was more than half won. Unfortunately, these last efforts, (the agonies of exhaustion and despair,) were mistaken by Major Van Horne, who commanded the right flank of the American line, as evidence only of the habitual prowess, untiring energy and great force of his Indian enemy; which, as he concluded, could not be long resisted, without the aid of a re-enforcement. A message to this effect overtook Colonel Miller, while closely pursuing the British and Canadian fugitives, a circumstance which could not fail to embarrass his movements. A halt was accordingly commanded, when, after a moment's reflection, giving up the glory of capturing one half of his enemy's force, he rapidly retraced his steps to rescue his comrades and cannon from the grasp of the other. A second message, soon after received from the right, left no doubt but that the victory was as complete, as the action had been general; and that Tecumseh, like Muir, had at last been compelled to save himself by flight. The pursuit of the latter was resumed; but with the effect only of increasing the regret, at the well-meant but erroneous estimate of the powers and

perseverance of the Shawanee chief. On reaching the shore of Lake Erie, the flying enemy was still visible; but at a distance, that rendered every attempt at farther annoyance useless, and on an element prohibiting all nearer approach.[1]

Returning to the place of combat, an encampment was hastily traced and the necessary guards posted; when the American commander employed himself in collecting the wounded, burying the dead, and ascertaining the state of his communications with the river Raisin. Receiving on this last head satisfactory information, that the Indian villages in his front were abandoned, and that there no longer existed any obstruction, on the part of the enemy, to his farther progress, he hastened to detach Captain Snelling to General Hull with an account of the action, and a requisition for boats to remove the wounded; for provisions, of which he was already much in want; and for such a reinforcement of men, as would replace those who had fallen in the combat. With even these modest and moderate demands, the General did not think it prudent to comply. Boats were indeed permitted to be sent, which, by the exertion of Colonel McArthur, arrived at nine o'clock on the morning of the 10th; but a reinforcement sufficient to fill up the chasm made in the ranks of the detachment, could not be spared; and of provisions, so much only was forwarded, as in the present hungry and comfortless condition of

2 Dalliba's Narrative.

the troops, "but sufficed for a single meal."[1] Believing, however, that the scantiness of this supply was the result of haste or accident, rather than of design, Colonel Miller despatched a second requisition on the contractor, and fresh assurances to the General, that "his communications with the river Raisin were now fully re-established." The messenger employed on this occasion, by some misdirection of his route, did not get back to the encampment until the evening of the 11th, and to the regret and astonishment of all, brought with him not the required supply of food, but a written and peremptory order "for the immediate return of the detachment." This order was strictly, though reluctantly obeyed, and at midday of the 12th, the corps re-entered Detroit.[2]

The General's conduct on this occasion could not escape animadversion. His more severe critics, com-

[1] Hull's trial; Miller's testimony.

[2] The American General, as usual, saw every thing through the medium of his fears. The effect of even this victory on his mind, was depressing and degrading. His official letter giving an account of it, laments "that nothing was gained by it but *honor;* and that the blood of seventy-five men had been shed *in vain;* as it but opened his communications as far as their bayonets had extended." It is thus he spoke of a victory, which drove the enemy from the field and from his purpose; which enabled the victors to remain nearly three days in front of Malden without molestation; and which, but for his orders of recall, would have enabled them to accomplish all the objects of the expedition. What would a bold and able leader have made of the moral effect of this victory on his own troops and on those of his enemy! With Mr. Hull, it degenerated into a chapter of lamentations on the *value* of a soldier's blood, and the *vanity* of a soldier's honor.

bining his uniform indifference to the state of his communications, the pressure necessary to induce him to take any measures for re-opening them, and the perverse preference given to those of the most inefficient and hopeless character, with this last act, of recalling a corps, which had beaten and routed the enemy from a fortified position of his own choosing, and which had thus substantially freed from obstruction the short remaining distance between itself and the river Raisin—did not scruple to impute to him a secret and systematic co-operation with the enemy; while others, less prone to suspicion and of more charitable temperament, ascribed it to an honest but false estimate of the value of the object to be attained, or of the degree of danger to be incurred in attaining it; and lastly, to a persuasion that the safety of his own position, now required a speedy and entire concentration of his forces. But of the several branches of this apology the General hastened to deprive himself, by organizing a new expedition, having the same object, but possessing inferior means; and with the additional objection, that its plan involved a longer march, by a route merely conjectural, and at a moment when the British force was fast accumulating in his front, and its bold and active leader had arrived at Malden.[1]

Colonel McArthur, the officer to whom the command of this new detachment had been assigned,

1 General Brock arrived at Malden on the 13th of August.—*Christie's Memoirs.*

set out late in the afternoon of the 14th, and after struggling with many and unforeseen difficulties—with thickets nearly impervious, with swamps almost impassable, and with hunger, which the General had forgotten to satisfy[1]—was at last compelled to retrace his steps towards Detroit; and arrived in the neighborhood of that post, in time to share in the misfortune, and witness the disgrace, which now awaited the main army.

This army, as has been already stated, recrossed the river Detroit on the evening of the 7th and morning of the 8th of August, with the exception of a few volunteers, who, in madness or in mockery, had been left for the protection of such British colonists as yet adhered to the American standard.[2] On the 11th, this shadow of support was also withdrawn; and on the 14th, General Brock, in prosecution of the plan already indicated, appeared at Sandwich, and immediately employed himself in constructing a battery to protect, at once, his present position and future operations. In executing this work, he met with no interruption; as every species of annoyance was either indirectly declined, or expressly forbidden

1 "The only food they had on this march, was green corn and pumpkins, found in the fields."—*McAffee.*

2 "Major Denny was left at the stockade-work at Sandwich, with one hundred and thirty convalescents and Anderson's artillerists, under orders 'to hold possession of that part of Upper Canada; to afford all possible protection to the well-disposed inhabitants, and to defend his post to the last extremity against musquetry; but if overpowered by artillery, to retreat.'"—*Idem.*

by General Hull. In vain, was permission solicited to erect a battery, with which to dislodge or destroy the enemy's shipping; in vain, a small detachment of one hundred men, required for the purpose of spiking the British cannon; to these, and to every similar proposition, involving credit to himself or danger to his adversary, the General turned either a deaf ear, or a positive refusal.[1]

Such was the state of things on the morning of the 15th, when a marquee (the top of which was so painted as to give it a strong resemblance to the British flag) was found erected in the centre of the American encampment. While this circumstance engaged the attention of the troops, exciting the surprise of all, and the suspicion of many, a boat from the enemy was seen approaching the shore. The officer under whose direction it came, having announced himself "the bearer of a written message from General Brock to General Hull," was promptly received and conducted to head-quarters. On examination, the letter he brought was found to contain a demand for the immediate surrender of the fort, and a menace of indiscriminate massacre in case of refusal.

A requisition of this kind, which, in all its aspects, was alike important and unexpected, would, no

1 "If you will give permission, I will clear the enemy, on the opposite shore, from the lower batteries?" The General answered, "Mr. Dalliba, I will make an agreement with the enemy, that if they will not fire on me, I will not fire on them."—*Dalliba's testimony; Hull's trial.*

doubt, have warranted an immediate recurrence to a council of war; but no such step was either taken or suggested. For once, the American General appeared to be both competent and willing to act without advice, and to take upon himself all responsibility. He accordingly, in terms sufficiently decided, rejected the demand, and to God and his sword committed the issue. Unfortunately, this defiance was addressed to one who knew well how to appreciate its meaning; and who did not for a moment suffer it to abate his diligence, lessen his hopes, or even increase his circumspection. His measures were pushed with a haste and temerity, which excluded all doubts of success; and with a disregard to rules, which sufficiently indicated his own conviction that he was but taking part in a pantomime.[1] The return of his messenger becoming the signal of attack, a fire from the newly-constructed battery was now opened on the town and fort of Detroit. This continued until ten o'clock in the evening, and was recommenced in the morning, but without any material injury to its objects; and was, in fact, but remarkable from its being the only semblance of stratagem, which the British commander condescended to employ in passing a river eleven hundred yards wide, in broad day, and within stroke of an

[1] So satisfied was Brock that he had nothing to fear from his enemy, that when advancing to the storm of the fort, his column of march was not preceded by a vanguard of any kind; and the General himself was seen riding alone, two hundred yards in advance of his column. —*Snelling's testimony; Hull's trial.*

enemy not less strong than himself. Nor, as the event showed, was there any error in the estimate (which this fact presupposes) of a want of courage, capacity, or fidelity in his adversary; for, on making the experiment, it completely succeeded, and not merely without the loss of a single life, or of a moment's time, but under a full demonstration that neither obstruction nor annoyance of any kind was meditated by the American General.[1]

On crossing the Detroit, it was Brock's intention to establish himself at Spring-Wells, and with the aid of the Indians, so to interpose between the American army and its resources, as to compel it to quit its fortress, and risk a field-fight for the defence of its communications; but having, soon after landing, received new information with regard to the fort and army generally, and having in particular, assured himself of the detachment made on the 14th from the latter under the command of Colonel McArthur, he determined to shorten the process, and substitute assault for investment.[2] The force at his disposal for this purpose did not exceed seven hundred combatants,[3] and of this number, four hundred were Canadian militia disguised in red coats. With this small corps, preceded by five pieces of light artillery,

1 "On the 12th, (two days before Brock's demand of a surrender,) the commanding officers of three of the regiments (the fourth being absent) were informed, through a medium admitting of no doubt, that the General had stated that 'a capitulation would be necessary.'"—*Colonel Cass's Letter to the Secretary of War, September 10th*, 1812.

2 Brock's official letter of the 17th of August, 1812. 3 Idem.

(six and three pounders,) he began his march along the margin of the river; while the savages, by a parallel movement through a wood, covered his left flank. Between eleven and twelve o'clock, the head of the column presented itself at the tanyards below the town, (about five hundred yards from the fort,) when the American officer, commanding an exterior battery of twenty-four pounders charged with grape shot, believing the moment had arrived when hostilities could no longer be postponed with propriety, directed his men to point their guns and commence a fire; but the order was immediately countermanded, and another issued in its stead, forbidding every kind of hostility, and menacing with immediate death all who should dare to infract it.[1]

The strength, position, and supplies of the American army, at this critical moment, have been frequently stated, and even judicially established. The morning reports to the Adjutant-General, made its effective force one thousand and sixty, exclusive of three hundred Michigan militia, and as many Ohio volunteers, detached under McArthur. Of this force, four hundred effectives (infantry and artillerists of the line) occupied the fort—a work of regular form and great solidity; surrounded by a wide and deep ditch, strongly fraised and palisadoed, and sustained by an exterior battery of two twenty-four pounders.[2] Three hundred Michigan militia, ready to combat for

[1] McAffee's History.

[2] Hull's trial; testimony of Captain Dalliba, General Taylor, and Major Jessup.

their firesides and altars, held the town,[1] which in itself formed a respectable defence against the best troops, and one quite redoubtable against the attacks of Indians or militia. Flanking the approach to the fort, and covered by a high and heavy picket-fence, lay four hundred Ohio volunteers, expert in the use of their weapons and anxious to employ them; while one mile and a half on the right, advancing by long and rapid strides, was McArthur's detachment, returning by a route which (had a defence been hazarded) would have brought them directly on the rear of the enemy.[2] Of provisions and ammunitions the supply was abundant; fifteen days rations, and much fixed and loose powder and lead, were amply sufficient for a trial of strength and skill, which a single hour would have decided.

Under circumstances thus auspicious, "while the troops, in sure anticipation of victory, awaited the approach of the enemy; when no sound of discontent was heard, nor any appearance of cowardice and disaffection seen; when every individual was at his post, and expected a proud day for his country and himself"—an order was received from the General to withdraw the troops from all exterior positions; to stack the arms and hoist a white flag, in token of submission to the enemy! "This order was received by the men with a universal burst of indignation; even the women were ashamed of an act, so disgraceful to the arms of their country; and all

1 Colonel Cass's letter, 10th September. 2 Idem.

felt as was proper and decorous, except the man in whose hands were the reins of authority."[1]

The terms of the capitulation which followed, were such as might be expected from the views and feelings in which it originated. No stipulation was made for the Canadian colonists who had joined the American standard; the Ohio and Michigan militia were brought under engagements not to serve again during the war, unless exchanged; the territory in its whole extent, was yielded with the army; and (that even more might be granted than was asked,) the supplies at the river Raisin, with their convoy and McArthur's detachment, (the exact situation of which was not then known at the fort,) were, on the suggestion of General Hull, included within the act of surrender. By another provision of this instrument, the militia, whether drafts or volunteers, were liberated, while Hull and the regular troops were despatched to Montreal.[2]

About the date of these transactions, a calamity of similar, and to the individuals concerned, of severer character, awaited the garrison of fort Dearborn,—a military post on the south-western extremity of Lake Michigan, possessing as was believed, a considerable influence over Indian wants and policy.

1 Colonel Cass's letter of the 10th September.

2 "General Hull with the officers and men of his army, were introduced into Montreal on the evening of the 6th of September, in a triumphal, though mock procession, amidst the shouts of a scornful multitude, indignant at the savage threat of extermination breathed in his proclamation."—*Christie's Memoirs.*

Forgotten alike by the government and the General until about the middle of July, an order was then sent by the latter to Captain Heald, "to dismantle the fort, destroy the surplus arms and ammunition, and withdraw the garrison to Detroit." From an ill-judged mode of communication, this order did not reach the fort until the 12th of August. On the 14th, the garrison, reinforced by a few Miami Indians, under the command of Captain Wells, began its intended march; but had not proceeded more than a mile, when it was attacked, in both front and rear, by a body of five or six hundred savages, whom it had left at Chicago, professing a neutral, if not a friendly character. Captain Heald, after a hard and unequal combat, in which fifty of his party fell, (and being himself wounded and deserted by the Miamis,) was compelled to accept a proposition for a parley, which was soon and necessarily followed by a surrender, on condition that the lives of the American survivors, not now exceeding twenty, should be spared.[1]

Such was the termination of this first expedition of the new war; the details of which, have in them so little to flatter, and so much to mortify the pride of the American arms. Nor must it be forgotten that this catastrophe, however disgraceful in itself

[1] Captain Heald, his wife and some third person, fell to the share of a party of Indians living at St. Josephs. Carried thither by their savage masters, they soon possessed themselves of a boat, in which they made their escape to Michilimackinac, where they found protection and the means of returning to the United States.

or disastrous in its consequences, was not the result of any of those occurrences, which, in the affairs of nations and of individuals, are denominated *accidents;* and which sometimes, triumph alike over the precautions of wisdom and the efforts of valor. We have seen that the army, in its march from the place of its rendezvous to that of its destination, was neither melted by heat, nor frozen by cold; neither persecuted by storms, nor crippled by enemies; neither wasted by disease, nor exhausted by famine; but that on the 5th of July it arrived at Detroit, in unimpaired health and spirits. From its friends, it received a cordial welcome, abundant supplies and a respectable addition to its force; and in its subsequent descent upon Canada, was scarcely less fortunate, as it found the British colonists indifferent, if not repugnant to the war; the Indian tribes, though secretly hostile, cautious and calculating; and the fortress of Malden, which alone sustained the enemy's interest in that section of the country, wholly indefensible. When at last, important changes had been wrought in this state of things, by the fall of Michilimackinac, the defeat of Van Horne, the obstruction given to our communications, the altered tone and temper of the British and savage population, and the doubts and misgivings which could not but prevail in our own ranks—when, in a word, fortune appeared to have decidedly taken part with the enemy against us, it was but to lead him into indiscretions; which, had they been seen and punished, would have promptly

reinstated our ascendency and accomplished the principal objects of the campaign. Like other advantages, these were permitted to escape, probably without notice, and certainly without improvement; leaving us only the mortifying reflection, that our disasters were of our own making, and the necessary consequence of an ignorance, which knew not what to do; of a self-sufficiency, refusing to be instructed; and of a cowardice, that in its terrors, lost all sense of national interest, personal dignity and professional duty.[1]

Remarks. The crimes and errors of public functionaries, however calamitous and disgraceful, are not without their uses. And that on this occasion, the bitter fruits of experience may, if possible, be converted into wholesome aliment, we subjoin a few observations indicating the principal faults committed, and the means by which they might have been substantially obviated, if not entirely avoided.

I. "Every commander of a corps, destined to the reduction of a fortress by siege or investment, ought, if possible, to draw his antagonist from behind his works, and induce him to risk an action in the open field." This maxim, nearly as old as the art to which it belongs, is founded on a reason sufficiently obvious, viz. that, "as forts make the weak strong, and the strong stronger, it necessarily follows, that it will be more easy to beat your enemy

[1] Hull's trial; testimony of Jessup, Snelling, Taylor, Eastman, &c.

without, than within his intrenchments." Of this rule and the reason on which it is founded, General Hull was either entirely ignorant or utterly regardless; for though on the 2d of July, according to his own statement, he found his adversary willing to forego the advantages given him by his fortress, and determined to risk a battle against a force much superior to his own; and with the additional disadvantage of interposing between himself and his only place of refuge, a wide and rapid river,—the challenge was not merely declined on our part, but such cunningly devised fables transmitted to Colonel St. George, as induced that officer to abandon his chivalrous, but unmilitary project.[1]

II. Another maxim of the art, which, like the preceding, is but a dictate of common sense, level to any ordinary capacity and requiring no scientific research, is,—that "whenever it be sufficiently ascertained, that your enemy is suffering under any extraordinary degree of debility, arising from deficient supplies, prevailing diseases, impaired disci-

1 "A large body of the militia had reinforced the British garrison, and all the surrounding tribes of Indians had been invited to his standard. Every preparation for attack was made on the 5th of July, and it was only prevented by a communication made to a person in Malden, who had the confidence of the commander; *that it was not the intention of the army to march to Detroit; that all the boats were collected on the west side of the river; that cannon had been sent for to Detroit; and that my intention was to cross the river and attack the fort. This information caused the commanding officer to abandon the enterprise,* and concentrate all his forces for the defence of his post.—*Hull's Memoirs*, p. 29.

pline, disaffection or want of numbers in his ranks, or ill-condition of his defences, it becomes your duty to assail him incessantly and vigorously."

It has been abundantly established, that between the 5th and 20th of July, fort Malden was, in all its parts, in a dilapidated state, and on two of its sides, (the north and west,) wholly indefensible; that during the same period, its nominal garrison did not exceed seven hundred men, of which, more than six hundred were militia and savages; the one, indifferent, if not disaffected to the war, and the other, professing neutrality and strictly forbidden by their military usages, from taking part in the defence of fortified places.[1] From these facts we are authorized to conclude, that had General Hull, at any time between the 5th and 20th of July, pushed boldly forward and presented his columns of attack before Malden, the place would have been surrendered to him, with as little ceremony as he surrendered Detroit on the 16th of August; a conclusion, put beyond all doubt by this additional fact, that when, on the 16th of July, the British outpost on the Canard was defeated and the bridge taken, so great was the alarm in Malden, that the shipping was brought up to the wharves, and actually employed in taking in the baggage, &c.[2]

1 Tecumseh's speech to General Proctor, 18th September, 1813,—"you told us that we need not trouble ourselves about the enemy's *garrisons*, and that you would take good care of *your own;* which made our hearts glad."

2 "There was a great deal of confusion in the town, moving effects,

III. Nothing can be more ill-judged and ruinous, than to send out small parties on services which necessarily expose them to the attacks of large ones; and hence the maxim, that "the strength of a detachment should be proportioned, 1st, to the importance of the object to be obtained in sending it; and 2d, to the disposable means possessed by the enemy of embarrassing or defeating the attainment of that object." In none of the detachments made by General Hull, were these conditions fulfilled; and in that of Major Van Horne, both were directly and grossly violated. What object could have been more important to the American army, situated as it then was, than the re-establishment of its communications with the State of Ohio; from which alone were to be expected reinforcements of men and supplies of provision? And again, what fact was better ascertained, than the facility with which the whole British force concentrated at Malden, and amounting to seven hundred combatants, could be brought to act upon any American detachment, marching by the route of Maguago and Brownstown? Yet was Van Horne sent to fulfil that object and by this route, with only two hundred militia-riflemen![1]

IV. When, on the 8th of August, Colonel Miller was detached to effect the purpose which Major

&c. The Queen Charlotte came to the wharf and took in the women and baggage, and had her topsails loose and ready to sail."—*Forbish and Gooding's testimony on Hull's trial.*

1 Hull's official report of the 26th of August, 1812.

Van Horne had failed to accomplish on the 5th, it required no spirit of prophecy to foresee, that Proctor (the British commander) would make every possible effort to overwhelm the second detachment as he had done the first; but that to this end he must employ *the whole force, composing the garrison under his command.* It is extraordinary, that this simple and obvious view of the subject, should have escaped the attention of any man to whom military ideas were at all familiar; or if it did occur to General Hull, that it should have failed to suggest the only means left for prosecuting his own objects, and converting the policy and enterprise of his antagonist into folly and misfortune. These means obviously were—so to strengthen Miller's detachment, as to leave nothing to chance; and thus to assure himself not merely of the discomfiture, but of the destruction of whatever force the enemy might hazard on the southern side of the Detroit; while, contemporaneously with Miller's movement, a second and small detachment should silently and rapidly descend the river to the neighborhood of Malden, and thence proceed to assail and carry the fort. That both parts of this plan (had it been adopted) would have entirely succeeded, there cannot now be a doubt; since, with the corps he had, Miller defeated Muir at the head of the whole British, Canadian and Indian force; and since, from the evening of the 7th to the 9th of August, fort Malden (ordinarily requiring the defence of seven hun-

dred men) was left to the custody of a *sergeant's guard only !*[1]

V. Notwithstanding these repeated blunders of the American General, fortune did not yet entirely abandon him; and on the 16th of August, presented a new occasion, requiring on his part only the vulgar quality of defensive courage, to have completely baffled the designs of Brock and re-established his own ascendency on the Detroit. This occasion was found in the indiscretion of his adversary; who, on crossing the river with a force smaller than it was his purpose to assail, had hastily determined to risk the storm of a fortification, strong in itself, abundantly supplied and sufficiently garrisoned. If it be thought extraordinary, that under these circumstances, General Brock should have forgotten all the dissuasives from attack furnished by history, it was certainly still less to be expected, that General Hull should have forgotten all the motives for defence furnished by the same source. Such, however, was the fact; the timidity of the one kept pace with the temerity of the other; and at last, in an agony of terror, which cunning could no longer dissemble and which history is ashamed to describe, the fort, army and territory were surrendered without pulling a trigger!

The errors which yet remain to be noticed are attributable to the administration—a fact, furnish-

[1] Lieutenant Forbish's testimony.

ing no reason why they should be treated with more ceremony than others, with which they were associated. They will be sufficiently indicated by the following remarks.

VI. The nation which meditates the invasion of a neighboring territory, should be careful to employ the last moments of peace, in acquiring a thorough knowledge of the force it may have to encounter. Another duty, not less obvious and imperative than the preceding, will be that of speedily withdrawing or promptly reinforcing its own remote and isolated posts. If there be any thing in the local position of these, that may render their retention important to the progress or issue of the war, the latter course should be pursued—but if on the contrary, it will have no material bearing on either, the garrisons should be speedily recalled and the posts abandoned, while this can be done successfully and safely. Yet were both these important duties neglected. When Hull arrived at Detroit, he was ignorant alike of *the condition of Malden and the number of its garrison.* So also the commandant of Michilimackinac continued to be *uninformed of even the declaration of war*, until after the investment and surrender of his post; while the garrison of fort Dearborn, still more remote, remained *unrecalled*, until the middle of August, when *retreat had become wholly impracticable.*

VII. We have seen that General Hull *lost his own baggage and that of the army, the whole of his hospital stores and intrenching tools, and sixty men*, in

consequence of the ill-judged and tardy manner employed in transmitting to him the declaration of war. A fact, so extraordinary in itself, and so productive of injury to the public, calls for more development than has yet been given to it. It will be remembered that a declaration of war was authorized on the 18th of June, 1812. On this day, Secretary Eustis wrote two letters to General Hull. In one of these, no mention was made of this important event; in the other, it was distinctly and officially announced. The former of the two, was carefully made up and expedited by a special messenger, who arrived in the General's camp on the 24th of June; while the latter, was committed to the public mail as far as Cleveland; and thence, through a wilderness of one hundred miles, to such conveyance, "as *accident might supply.*" The result was, that the declaration did not reach its destination until the 2d of July, *two days after it had been received by the enemy at Malden.* On this occasion, the British government was better served: Provost received notice of it on the 24th of June, at Quebec; Brock, on the 26th, at Newark; St. George, on the 30th, at Malden; and Roberts on the 8th of July, at St. Josephs. But a fact, still more extraordinary than the celerity of these transmissions is, that the information thus rapidly forwarded to *Malden* and *St. Josephs,* was received *under envelopes, franked by the Secretary of the American Treasury.*[1]

[1] Official Report of Captain Hanks to the commanding General at Detroit, see also Appenpix, No. 6.

VIII. Few things are more self-evident, than that so long as the enemy had a fleet on Lake Erie and we had none, Malden could be supplied and reinforced by the British posts below; and that if hardly pressed, its garrison could be safely withdrawn to one or other of these posts. To meet these contingencies, and to protect Hull's long line of provisionment from interruption,[1] two suggestions were made—the one, to construct a navy competent to the command of the lake;[2] the other, to assemble on the Niagara a military force, which by menacing the safety of forts Erie and George, would prevent Brock from making detachments to Malden. In choosing between these alternatives, the government did not hesitate—they promptly rejected the former, and adopted the latter; but, unfortunately, without taking measures sufficiently decided for giving it execution. When, accordingly, Hull perceived that the enemy's force at Malden was increased and increasing, he called aloud on the militia officer commanding at Buffalo for support—who announced in reply, that "*he had none to give, direct or indirect.*" So also, when the Secretary of War ordered Major-General Dearborn to make *speedy movements on the British posts in his front*, the General answered—that "*till then, he had not known that the troops on the Niagara made part of his command.*"[3]

1 The line extended two hundred miles through a desert, and in a great part of its length was skirted by the lake, commanded by the British ships.

2 Hull's Memoirs; testimony of Mr. Eustis on Hull's trial.

3 Appendix No. 7.

IX. The principal advantage accruing to a nation, which is the first to declare war, is that of selecting its *time* and *point of attack*, and of concentrating on the latter, such force as will ensure victory, and the moral effect produced by it on both belligerents. Of this truth, so obvious in itself, the American cabinet of 1812, do not appear to have been apprised—for when (according to General P. B. Porter's testimony) Hull required *three* thousand men, as the least number with which all the objects of the campaign could be successfully prosecuted; the government replied, that "more than *two thousand* could not be given."[1]

Whether this decision be examined in relation to the capacity of the nation; to the variety and importance of the services to be performed; or to the means necessary to their execution, nothing could have been more erroneous. To those who know any thing of the character or numbers of the western population, or of their peculiar interests and feelings at that period and on this subject, we need but remark, (and without any fear of contradiction,) that five thousand men could have been obtained as promptly as two thousand. When again it is recollected, that the defence of our western posts and territory; the prevention of a war with the savages; the capture of Malden; the command of Lake Erie, and the means of a prompt co-operation with the troops destined to act on the Niagara, formed the objects of the campaign—who can for a moment doubt

1 Hull's trial; General P. B. Porter's testimony.

their magnitude or interest? And lastly, though it be readily admitted, and we hope sufficiently proved, that the force given to General Hull was competent to the capture of Malden and the preservation of Detroit, still it by no means follows, that it was commensurate with all the objects of the expedition; since among these were to be found, "the capture or destruction of the British fleet on Lake Erie,"[1] an object which, in the absence of all naval means, could only be effected by such an augmentation of the army as would have entirely excluded the British fleet from the shores of the lake.

Had the government taken this short and plain view of the subject, and invited Governor Shelby of Kentucky, or Governor Meigs of Ohio, to follow in Hull's track, with two thousand gun-men and Winchester's brigade of infantry, how different would have been the issue of the campaign? Unfortunately, we began by weighing military expeditions in gold scales; and the experiment proved (as it will never fail to do) that parsimony, always paltry, is in *war* the most lavish and criminal prodigality.

[1] President's Message of November 4th, 1812.

CHAPTER III.

Militia Operations in the West.—Harrison's Autumnal and Winter Campaigns.

Of the disasters detailed in the preceding chapter, those of most early occurrence—the fall of Michilimackinac, the occlusion of supplies from Ohio, the defeat of Van Horne, and the retreat of the army from Canada, were more productive of surprise than alarm: all wondered at the events which had so unexpectedly taken place; but few, if any, ascribed them to their true cause, or foresaw either the extent of the evil, or the means most proper for remedying it. The executive confidence in the competency of the commander, continued to be unshaken; and no doubts were entertained, but that with the aid of a prompt reinforcement and a vigorous diversion on the Niagara, he would be able to hold what he possessed, recover what he had lost, and eventually accomplish all the objects of the expedition.

With these views of the subject, orders were issued for immediately organizing two corps in the west; one of which, to consist of sixteen hundred volunteers and four hundred regular troops, under the command of Brigadier-General Winchester, was destined to the support of Hull: the other, to be com-

posed of three regiments of Kentucky militia, subjected to the orders of Brigadier-General Harrison, was assigned to the defence of Indiana and Illinois; while the army of the north, under the command of Major-General Dearborn, was directed to hold itself in readiness, for an immediate attack upon one or more, of the British positions in its front.[1]

Of these orders, the first, so far as regarded the assembling of the troops, was promptly executed; and the corps assigned to Winchester, actually in motion for the Ohio frontier, when on the 24th of August, the appalling information was received, that Detroit, the territory, and the army, had been already surrendered to the enemy. Unexpected calamities are in general bad counsellors, and often hurry those disposed to listen to them, into the adoption of measures little calculated to promote their own objects. On the present occasion, the government, adhering to its policy of carrying the war into Canada, without apparently perceiving the want, and certainly without providing the aid, of any co-operating naval force, now hastily determined to put its trust in an unlimited employment of militia and a lavish expenditure of money—a plan which, though

1 On the 1st of August, Mr. Eustis gave notice to General Dearborn of the contents of a letter received from General Hull, of July 19th, by express, in consequence of which he subjoins the following order:—"You will make a diversion in his (General Hull's) favor at Niagara and at Kingston, as soon as may be practicable, and by such other operations as may be within your control." See vol. 6th, p. 199, Records of the War Department. These orders, substantially, were repeated in several subsequent communications.

far short of its objects, was, notwithstanding, well adapted to the feelings, wants, and calculations of the west.

The sedative effect produced by the war on the value of ordinary labor and its products; the comparatively ample compensation given for military service; the political excitement of the times, and the increased impulse given to this by the late disaster at Detroit, operating conjointly on an abundant, unoccupied, and high-spirited population, could not fail to bring together a large mass of ill-equipped and undisciplined men, who believing in the infallibility of western courage and rifles, sought no auxiliary in fulfilling the intentions of government, within even the short period of their own engagements.[1] The force, which under these influences was in a few weeks assembled at different points of the frontier, exceeded ten thousand combatants;[2] of which, that portion originally destined to the support of Hull, and best prepared for immediate service, was detached to fort Wayne—a small post on the Miami of the Lake, already sustaining an Indian investment, and still farther menaced by a British detachment, advancing under the command of Major Muir. But of these enemies, the former disappeared on the approach of the American column, without making any resistance; and the latter, not showing more disposition to hazard a contest, hastily withdrew to its boats and returned to Malden. It was now deemed

[1] McAffee. [2] Idem.

proper, as well for the purpose of giving occupation to the troops, as for that of preventing any new attempt on the fort, to direct a few detachments against such of the Indian villages as had most contributed to the late investing party; but though made with sufficient zeal and activity, the experiment failed in producing any effect more important than the destruction of a few cabins and the corn growing around them.

While these circumstances were taking place in the northern section of the district, others, of a mixed character, good and bad, grave and ludicrous, were occurring in the southern. Early in September, a small band of savages, of the Potowatamie and Winebago tribes, appeared at fort Harrison; and feigning weariness and hunger, besought for the night the shelter and hospitality of the fort. But on finding that Captain Taylor, the commanding officer, gave no credit to their story, and even suspected their hostility, they threw off the mask, and collecting their associates, (who had hitherto laid concealed in the neighboring thickets,) united in a bold and persevering attack on the fort. During the progress of this, the assailants found means to burn a block-house, (which made part of the work,) and thus opened to themselves a new passage to the interior; but, though making many strenuous efforts to profit by this advantage, they failed in all, and were ultimately repulsed with considerable loss. To make up in some degree for this disappointment, the party repaired to a frontier settlement on the Pigeon's

Roost, where they killed or captured twenty-one of the inhabitants.

This last incident would, perhaps, have been alone sufficient to have called forth a new display of Kentucky population and patriotism; but to its authority was superadded that of a requisition from General Harrison for a force, which, with the three regiments already detached to Vincennes, would be competent not merely to the defence of Indiana and Illinois, but to the punishment of such Indian tribes as were most likely to disturb and molest any neighboring territory.[1] Governor Shelby, upon whom the requisition was made, hastened to give it execution, and with not more of attention, than the General himself had employed, in proportioning the quantum of force to the nature and exigencies of the service. When, therefore, we consider that the invitation to the field was without limitation as to numbers; that the causes requiring it were not a little exaggerated,[2] and that the policy, no less than the patriotism of the state, induced every man to become a soldier, we can no longer wonder that the Governor's proclamation should, within twenty days, have assembled an army of four thousand men, equipped for service, and all, Tartar-like, mounted on horseback.

The command of this formidable array was committed to Major-General Hopkins of the militia, who reached fort Harrison about the 10th of October. Finding nothing nearer to his own frontier to

1 McAffee.

2 Harrison's letter to Shelby, 5th Sept. 1812; McAffee, p. 156.

give him occupation, he on the 14th, began his march for the Indian villages on the Wabash and Illinois. Much of the ground he had to traverse was of the prairie character, (scantily supplied with water and entirely destitute of wood,) but abounding in tall, coarse grass. The effect of this redundant herbage on the army resembled enchantment; every step they took upon it, abated alike their ardor and intelligence; the guides lost their way; the General his authority, and the troops their submission; and on the fourth day after leaving fort Harrison (discovering that the prairie was on fire, and mistaking this for a *ruse* of the enemy) this "press of western chivalry" turned their backs on the war, and withdrew *en masse* to Kentucky.

About the same time, and in concert with the preceding movement, an expedition on a smaller scale, but of more successful character, was instituted by Governor Edwards of the Illinois Territory, and conducted by Colonel Russell of the rangers. Its object was an Indian town at the head-waters of Lake Peoria, which, by a rapid and well-directed march, the detachment was able to surprise and destroy. On the first alarm, the savages betook themselves to a neighboring swamp, whither they were hotly pursued and speedily routed—leaving behind them twenty dead bodies, a considerable store of corn, and sixty horses laden with baggage.

A second expedition under the direction of General Hopkins, and made for the laudable purpose of fulfilling the intentions and wiping out the disgrace

of the first, was now organized at fort Harrison. The corps employed on this occasion, was composed of a few regular troops, about fifty mounted gunmen, and the three regiments of Kentucky militia, detached under the first requisition; who, directing their march along the eastern bank of the Wabash, in eight days reached their first object, and destroyed in succession three of the principal Indian villages, with the loss of eighteen of their own corps; who, by some negligence or misdirection in their march, fell into an ambuscade of the enemy. Admonished alike by this disaster, the nakedness of the troops, an unfavorable change in the weather, and the impossibility of bringing the savages to a general action, the commanding officer thought it advisable to return to Vincennes.

Such was the state of things on the western frontier, when the government, having decided the rival pretensions of General Winchester and Harrison, vested in the latter the command of the army and district;[1] with orders sufficiently definite as to

[1] The intrigue by which this outrage on military rules and the laws of Kentucky was accomplished, will be found in McAffee, pp. 107—8, and is substantially as follows: Governor Scott had a desire to commission Harrison as a *Major-General* of the Kentucky militia, with a view of thus enabling him to supersede Winchester in the command; but to the honest and unsophisticated mind of Scott, the arrangement appeared impossible, inasmuch as by the laws of Kentucky, officers of militia must be inhabitants of the state—a qualification which did not apply to General Harrison. To get over these scruples of conscience on the part of the Governor, a few casuists were employed to change his opinions, and in this they at last succeeded. For the General's own agency in the business, see Appendix, No. 6.

the objects to be pursued, but entirely discretionary as to the time and mode of pursuing them. Availing himself of the latitude given by this new and increased authority, the General hastened to remodel his plan of campaign, and promptly rejecting his first project of recapturing Detroit by a *coup de main*,[1] substituted for it a march by three separate and distant routes across the swampy and uninhabited region in his front, to the Rapids of the Miami—whence, "after accumulating *one million of rations for the troops*, and *forage for two thousand horses and oxen*,[2] he proposed marching rapidly on Brownstown, crossing the river Detroit, and *before the commencement of winter, taking Malden and recapturing the Michigan Territory*."

1 While acting in a subordinate capacity to Winchester, the General had no doubt of being able, with a few mounted men, to retake Detroit by a *coup de main*, and was careful so to inform the government.—*McAffee*, p. 166. When, however, by means of this and other representations, having the same object, he became commanding officer of the army and district, his views suddenly changed; the rapid and certain process by a *coup de main* was abandoned as hopeless, (*McAffee*, p. 141,) and one, more systematic and imposing, substituted for it—requiring as a preliminary to any direct movement on Malden or Detroit, an accumulation at the Rapids of twelve months' forage and provisions, with carts, wagons, &c., necessary to transport them from the place of deposit to the scene of action—or, in other words, the entire purchase of all surplus corn, flour and fodder, oxen, horses, carts, wagons, &c., to be found within the State of Ohio; and this at a time, (22d of October,) when he says of the roads—"to get supplies forward through a swampy wilderness of near two hundred miles, in wagons, or on pack-horses, which are to carry their own provisions, is absolutely impossible."

2 McAffee, p. 167.

In prosecution of this plan, the army was divided into three columns; that of the left, composed of Kentucky militia and the seventeenth United States regiment, (commanded by Brigadier-General Winchester) was assigned to the route of the St. Mary; the central column, consisting of twelve hundred Ohio militia and eight hundred mounted infantry, commanded by Brigadier-General Tupper, to that of fort McArthur; while the column of the right, made up, or intended to be made up, (for all its elementary parts had not yet arrived) of three brigades of militia from Pennsylvania, Virginia and Ohio, led by General Harrison in person, was to approach its object by the two Sandusky's.

Under these arrangements, the General had hopes on the 4th of October, that "within a fortnight from that date" he would be able to accumulate at the Rapids the necessary supply of food and forage, assemble the several parts of the army and begin his intended movement on Brownstown. But these hopes, which had little if any thing to justify them, were not fated to be of long duration; as on the very day on which they were expressed, the column of the left was found to be on the verge of mutiny and desertion. This conduct in a corps, which had hitherto showed only zeal in forwarding the objects of the expedition, was produced by the increased coldness of the weather and the miserable condition of their clothing; by a state of the roads, rendering them nearly impassable; by a deficiency of food, not easily to be accounted for; and by a discovery

(in which they but anticipated their commander) that his project of an autumnal campaign was wholly impracticable.[1] In this dilemma, the General found it prudent to employ persuasion rather than authority, and invoking the aid of Colonel Allen's eloquence in addition to his own, prevailed upon the column to prolong its stay and its efforts.

With Brigadier-General Tupper and the mounted men of the central column, he was less fortunate. Learning while at Winchester's cantonment that a party of Indians occupied the Rapids, (his intended point of concentration,) he ordered Tupper with eight hundred mounted men to advance and dislodge them, but this order, though reinforced by another from Winchester, was from time to time scandalously evaded—when the troops losing all confidence in their General and the General in the troops, they mutually agreed to withdraw to Urbanna.

To this useless band succeeded another, fortunately possessing a leader of more efficient character. Colonel Allen Trimble having arrived at St. Mary with a corps of five hundred mounted infantry, was directed to march to the defence of fort Wayne, (now menaced with a second investment by the Indians,) and thence to the Potowatomie villages, on the sources of the river St. Joseph. No enemy being found at the fort, the Colonel hastened to execute the remaining and secondary part of the

[1] McAffee, p. 146. 183—4.

expedition, when one half of the corps, in the exercise of its volunteer rights, refused to go farther. The Colonel, being thus left to choose between an abandonment of his purpose, or an attempt to execute it with half the force originally assigned to the enterprise, did not hesitate to adopt the latter; and supplying the want of numbers by vigilance and activity, was soon able to reach and destroy the two villages indicated in his orders.

It was now the 28th of October. The fortnight which, according to General Harrison's calculations, was to have done much, had passed away without doing any thing; the rainy season had already began; land transportation, always difficult, was now impracticable; and idleness, nakedness and hunger were working their ordinary effects on the health, habits and temper of the troops; rendering them sick, and sour, and restless—a state of things which the General could no longer conceal from himself, and which brought him, at last, to the reluctant confession, that the project of an *autumnal campaign* must be abandoned, and a *winter expedition* adopted in its stead. "My present plan," he says, in a letter of the preceding date, to the Secretary of War, "is to occupy Sandusky and accumulate, at that place, as much provision and forage as possible; to be taken from thence in sleds to the river Raisin. For to get supplies forward through a swampy wilderness of nearly two hundred miles extent, in wagons, or on pack-horses carrying their own provender, is impossible. Still the main object may be accomplished

by using the frozen margin of the lake, if the troops are provided with warm clothing, and the winter be such as it usually is in this climate."[1]

As, however, many weeks must elapse between the date of this new determination and the actual occurrence of such a condition of weather as could alone render it practicable, it was deemed expedient to employ the interval in destroying such Indian lodgements, temporary and permanent, as from actual force or locality of position, were most likely to disturb the left wing of the army, or the transportation of supplies going on under its protection. Of these lodgements, one had recently been made at the foot of the Rapids; ostensibly for the purpose of gathering and transporting corn, but, as was suspected, secretly destined to co-operate with the Miamis in some military enterprise on our frontier posts and convoys. To break up this party became, therefore, a matter of moment; and to effect it, General Tupper, whose feats in arms we have already commemorated, was detached, early in November, at the head of six hundred and fifty Ohio militia and a few mounted rangers. On approaching his object, he prudently employed a reconnoitring party to ascertain whether any changes had taken place in the force or position of the enemy? And being as-

[1] It was by thus qualifying his real opinions, that he carried the cabinet along with him in his attempts to execute his absurd projects. They at last saw, or thought they saw, in these contradictory statements, a desire on the part of the General, to escape responsibility, and a design to induce them to incur it.

sured, on the return of the party, that the allies, red and white, besides continuing where they had been, and without any material increase of numbers, were "now indulging themselves in singing and dancing," he manfully determined to cross the Miami and take part in the revel; but defeated in this by the depth of the water and strength of the current, instead of ascending the river and seeking a fording place of safer and quieter character, (which might have been readily found,) he followed the stream downward, and placing himself directly in front of the British and Indian camp, sufficiently announced, not only his arrival, but his intention also of shifting from himself and imposing on his enemy, both the trouble and danger of crossing the river. In this last calculation, however, he entirely lost sight of the anti-chivalrous character of Indian warfare. The first care of the red man of the forest is to take care of himself; and the second, so to measure the strength and temper of his antagonist as will enable him to judge, not merely on what side of a stream he shall fight, but whether he shall fight on either side of it. With this view, on the present occasion, after sending their women and children to the woods, and their allies to their boats, the Indians made a show of engaging at long shot; while a few mounted parties despatched across the Miami, soon found out the flanks and rear of their adversary, and sufficiently indicated their intention—not of fighting a pitched battle, but of harassing his progress when he moved, and disquieting his positions when he became sta-

tionary. As this was a state of things the General had not foreseen, and greatly disliked, he quickly resorted to the only expedient by which he supposed it could be remedied; and accordingly, early in the night of the 15th, began a rapid retreat to fort McArthur.[1]

While Tupper was making this second display of military talent, another expedition, under better auspices, was preparing at Franklintown. A corps of six hundred mounted men, selected from the army, were placed under the direction of Lieutenant-Colonel Campbell, with orders to march against the Indian villages on the Missisineway. Of these, they reached the most northwardly, at daybreak on the 18th of December, but without having been able to surprise it completely. A portion of the occupants escaped across the river; whilst the remainder, after a short and feeble resistance, surrendered to the assailants. No time was lost in pursuing this advantage, and three other villages were visited and destroyed by the party.

The troops, having been now thirty-six hours on horseback, and having suffered much from cold, hunger, and fatigue, encamped for the night on the bank of the river, where they remained undisturbed till near daylight; when the outposts were furiously driven in, and the camp sharply and generally assailed, but without producing the smallest ill-effect on its spirit and order. At the dawn of

[1] McAffee, p. 171.

day, when a proper direction could be given to the movement, both flanks of the Indian line were rapidly turned, and its rear charged and routed. The general result of the expedition, however, was not flattering: twenty-three Indians were killed, forty-two taken, and four out of five villages, destroyed;[1] while on our side, ten men were killed, forty-eight wounded, and nearly two hundred rendered unfit for service, by disease and frost-bitten hands and feet.

These preliminary steps taken, and the column of the right with the park of artillery arrived at Sandusky, orders were now given to General Winchester, who had hitherto occupied a position near the mouth of the Au Glaize, to push forward to the Rapids; clear the front and flanks of that post of hostile parties; construct huts for the better protection of the advancing supplies; and prepare sleds for the intended movement on Malden. Under these orders, the General commenced his march on the 31st of December, at the head of about one thousand effectives; but the roads becoming much obstructed by snow, it was not till the 10th of January, that he reached the point to which he was destined. Finding on his arrival no traces of an enemy, excepting a single and small Indian encampment, (the occupants of which were promptly pursued and routed,) he now directed his attention to the preparatory labors already indicated —when on the 13th, 14th, and 15th of the month,

[1] The fifth, and unapproached village, contained the principal Indian force.

expresses were received from the inhabitants of Frenchtown, representing the many and aggravated horrors of their situation, and entreating the interposition of the American arms. "The British," they said, "no longer conceal their intention of carrying off our grain and our cattle; and the savages menace us with the destruction of our dwellings, and the massacre or captivity of our persons. Without your aid, we have no hope; with it, we may be able to defend ourselves, our wives, and our children; but this aid, to be effectual, must be prompt. The present number of the enemy among us, does not exceed three hundred combatants—a force that will be soon and considerably augmented; after which, your interposition would be useless, and our ruin complete."

An appeal like this, addressed to men of high and liberal views, could not be made in vain. The warm-hearted and gallant Allen, became its ready and zealous advocate. To his quick and intelligent mind, the policy it invoked appeared to be sustained by every motive that ought to govern in the case—sympathy for the afflicted; duty to fellow-citizens, and a correct interpretation of military maxims. "Can we," he said, "turn a deaf ear to the cries of men, women and children, about to perish under the scalping-knife and tomahawk of the savage? Can we regard with indifference the perils of those whose attachments to the United States have alone rendered them obnoxious to the calamities they dread? Can it be possible, that the wisdom of beating an enemy in detail, can either escape our notice or require argu-

ments to obtain our approbation? For what purpose are we here, but to seek, to find, and to fight this very enemy? And shall we permit his advanced guard to perpetrate all the mischief it meditates, and return in safety to its main body? Is it by such conduct that we shall wipe out the disgrace of Hull's surrender, or fulfil the promises made to our friends when, leaving our own firesides, we took upon us the temporary profession of arms? And if not, by what considerations is it recommended? Will it be said, that the force of the hostile detachment is too great to be successfully combated, or in other words, that a thousand freemen are unequal to a contest with three hundred savages and slaves? The supposition is degrading, and merits not the ceremony of a refutation. Will it, on the other hand, be alleged, that it is too inconsiderable to be noticed? This also would be an error—for besides, that victory, on any scale, is not without its moral effects on both belligerents, an abstraction of three hundred men from the present force of the enemy, would materially diminish his power, and give us a decided ascendency in prosecuting what remains of the campaign. Again: will it be said, (and, if I mistake not, it has been said,) that so near an approach to the den of the Lion would be imprudent? To this I reply, that danger is inseparable from war, and that the soldier who goes upon the plan of running no risk, is necessarily self-condemned to inaction and disgrace; whereas he who dares boldly, may do much. Since then, activity and enterprise are the elements of

victory, let us beware of calculating dangers too nicely—this was the fault and ruin of Hull, and cannot surely be thought worthy of our imitation. If the Lion, as he has been called, moves at all, he will do so in one of two ways:—he will either send a second detachment to support the first, in which case, both may be separately beaten,—or he will put his whole force in motion, and thus furnish us with a sufficient excuse for falling back upon our own army, which cannot now be far in the rear. From this brief and general view of the subject, I am led to conclude, that we should hasten our march to Frenchtown; attack, and if possible, destroy the advanced corps of the enemy; give protection to a meritorious and suffering people, and obtain the control of resources, of which we are much in want, and which otherwise will go to sustain the war against us."

The effects of this address were not equivocal—the General no longer hesitated, and the council, not having many or important doubts to remove,[1] it was speedily determined that "a detachment should be sent, as expeditiously as possible, to Frenchtown." A corps was organized accordingly, and beginning its march on the 17th, it was able at three o'clock, P. M. of the 18th, to present itself in front of the town, when the fire of the British artil-

[1] Colonel Lewis and Major Madison stated, that according to their recollection, the opinion of the council of war was unanimous for proceeding to Frenchtown.

lery opened upon it. The measures taken by Colonel Lewis, the commander of the American detachment, were well-timed and well-judged. Without the smallest unnecessary delay, he ordered the two battalions of Graves and Madison, (preceded by Ballard's light infantry,) to cross the river[1] and drive the British and their allies from the houses and picket fences, of which they had hitherto availed themselves; while the remaining battalion, under the command of Colonel Allen, was so posted on the right as to flank any retrograde movement made or attempted by the enemy. The first of these orders was gallantly executed, and in a few minutes, Reynolds, the British commander, was driven from the village and compelled to seek another position. In doing this, he was soon and necessarily brought into contact with Allen's battalion, by which he was vigorously attacked and pursued, until at last, the shelter of a second group of houses and a wood enabled him to renew his defence.

Lewis's conduct under these new circumstances was not less prudent and proper than on the former occasion. Retaining Allen's battalion on the ground it occupied, and which menaced at once the front and left of the enemy's position, he detached those of Graves and Madison to turn his right and rear. The firing which grew out of this manœuvre became the signal for Allen to act; when, under the

[1] The river was then covered by a thick and strong ice.

pressure of the two attacks, Reynolds was again routed and compelled to betake himself wholly to the forest. It was here that his Indian auxiliaries found their true *champ de battaille;* for though kept in constant retreat for three miles in succession, they maintained the conflict with great obstinacy, and but yielded at last to the superior force and well-conducted charges of the Kentucky militia. Colonel Lewis now led back his detachment to the town, and hastened to inform General Winchester of the events of the day.

If victory often impairs the faculties of strong and practised minds, what ill-effects may it not produce on those of less power, wholly unacquainted with war as a science? Unfortunately, on the present occasion, its only product was a self-sufficiency, in which every thing approaching the character of military foresight and discretion was forgotten. A council of war, convened on the morning of the 19th, determined "to maintain their new position and wait the arrival of reinforcements," and in this decision, the two Generals, Winchester and Harrison, united, but without sufficiently foreseeing the necessity of rendering more defensible an open village, within stroke of the enemy, and unprotected by a single cannon. Nor was it the effect of the arrival of the former of these commanders to correct or in any degree to qualify, this oversight. On the contrary, the small accession of force brought by him, (not exceeding two hundred and fifty men,) became the cause of an increased security, which

set aside even the most ordinary precautions; as on the night of the 21st, (though informed that the enemy meditated an attack,) the troops were neither kept together, nor was a picket-guard placed on the only road, by which their position could be readily or conveniently approached.[1]

While thus in the American camp nothing was seen, but disregard for themselves, nor any thing heard, but contempt for their enemy, Proctor, the British commander, was fast advancing from Malden, at the head of his whole disposable force, and was even permitted to establish a battery within point-blank shot of the town, without being either disturbed or discovered. Instead, however, of availing himself of this advantage, and making his attack before daybreak, which would have best secured him against Kentucky rifles, and probably effected the complete surprise of his adversary, he waited the approach of dawn, and thus became visible to an out-lying sentinel, who gave the alarm at the moment that the American drums were preparing to beat the reveille. Failing, therefore, to catch his enemy asleep, and forbidden alike by season, weather and want of preparation, from employing siege or investment, he resorted to assault, as the only means he had left for accomplishing his purpose; and with this view, covering his front with artillery and his flanks with Indian marksmen, he began his movements on the town, and had ap-

1 McAffee, p. 302.

proached within musket-shot of the pickets, when he was met by a fire so galling and incessant, as made an immediate retreat necessary.[1]

The left of his attack was more fortunate. In the hasty dispositions made for defence, the detachment of two hundred and fifty men brought by Winchester on the 20th, instead of being posted behind the pickets and held there in reserve, or made to occupy the houses which entirely commanded the approaches to the place, were most preposterously drawn out in a line, on the open ground, on the right of the town, and without a *point d'appui*, for either flank. This weak and isolated position could not long escape the notice of the enemy, who hastened to concentrate upon it all his disposable means, Indian and British; and in twenty minutes, threw the American line into a state of confusion, which no possible exertion could restrain, and which soon and necessarily terminated in the capture or slaughter of nearly all the fugitives, including two companies of fifty men each, led from behind the pickets by Colonels Lewis and Allen. Yet with even this decided advantage, Proctor indicated little, if any disposition, to renew the attack on his first object. The experiment he had made on the covered part of the American position, had taught him a lesson of prudence he could not forget. He had lost by it nearly one fourth of his regular force, without having made any serious impression upon either the strength or the spirit of

[1] McAffee, p. 215.

his adversary; and to incur a similar loss by a second attempt, though attended by success, would in effect be exhausting on an advanced corps, the means given him of resisting the main body. Other considerations may be supposed to have increased the weight of this reasoning—the weather was cold, the snow deep, and Harrison's head-quarters already advanced to the Rapids; while his own corps was neither sufficiently provided against the elements nor the enemy. What, therefore, could not be done by a *coup de main*, (a sudden attack and speedy retreat) he should forbear to attempt; and the more so, as he was now encumbered with prisoners, and with the wounded of both armies. The pause in his operations, which took place about this time, may, therefore, be justly ascribed to reasoning like this, which must have been conclusive, and would have sent him back to Malden, satisfied with the advantage he had gained, but that information was now brought that General Winchester was among the number of prisoners made by the Indians. This unexpected incident, suggested to Proctor a new course of proceeding, of which he hastened to make the experiment. Causing the prisoner to be brought before him, he dilated freely on the extent of his force, and still more on that of his humanity. "I have," he said, "the means of setting fire to every house in the village, without risk to myself; and may thus, soon and safely reduce the party, which so unwisely attempts to defend it. But in this case, what will be the fate of the inhabitants, men, women

and children, and of the American militia associated with them? Such of these as may escape the fire of our musketry and cannon, will unavoidably fall under the tomahawks of our allies, whom it will be impossible to restrain in the heat of action. May I never witness such a spectacle! But, need I tell you, that private feelings cannot be indulged at the expense of public duty; and that, however agreeable it would be to me as a *man*, to avoid the employment of means, so terrible in themselves as those I have suggested, yet as an *officer*, I cannot be justified in omitting to do, whatever may be necessary or useful to the King's service. I have, therefore, to submit to you a single and short proposition, containing the only remedy the case admits of, and that is—that in your quality of commanding General, you will immediately surrender to me Frenchtown and the garrison it contains."

To Winchester, the situation of the gallant band, whom Proctor called the garrison of Frenchtown, appeared to be hopeless. He saw no reason to expect any interposition in their favor from the Rapids, and from no other quarter was it possible to obtain any, in time to be useful; yet without a reinforcement, the contest, as he supposed, must be short and unavailing. He had, besides, just witnessed the slaughter or capture of nearly one half of his command; and saw with horror what would probably be the fate of the other, if, as menaced by Proctor, it was deprived of its covering and obliged to combat on the open ground. His decision on Proctor's proposition

was, therefore, soon and humanely taken, and having yielded his assent, he immediately despatched an Aid-decamp to inform Majors Graves and Madison, that "they and their followers had been surrendered prisoners of war, to the arms of his Britannic Majesty."[1]

This annunciation of the unconditional surrender of a corps, which had hitherto triumphed over every attack made upon it, and which yet believed in its capacity of self-defence, could not fail to be ill-received by those to whom it was addressed. Though entertaining no doubts of the purity and benevolence of the General's views in taking this step, they did not scruple to question the validity of any engagement made by him in their behalf, after he had become a prisoner; and the less so, as the agreement actually entered into and communicated, contained no security whatever against Indian or other outrage, in the event of their acceding to it. The determination of Major Madison (whom the disasters of the day had now made commandant of the corps) was therefore judiciously taken.—"We shall run all risks," he said, "of a prolonged resistance, and perish, if such must be our fate, in a free and full use of our arms, unless the British commander will come under a solemn engagement that private property shall in all cases be respected; that the side-arms of officers shall be restored to them on their arrival at Amherstburg; that the wounded shall be promptly

[1] McAffee, p. 215.

and securely transported to that post; and that, until this last provision be complied with, a guard sufficient for their protection shall be assigned to them." These conditions, though altogether such as brave men had a right to demand, and a liberal enemy would have had no hesitation in granting, were for a time resisted by Proctor; but finding that his attempts at either duping or intimidating his adversary were unavailing, and feeling the importance to himself of even a qualified surrender, which should make unnecessary a renewed attack on the town or a longer continuance before it, he at last, after an altercation as little honorable to his manners as to his principles,[1] yielded his objections, and entered into the engagements proposed to him.

What remained of the day was assiduously employed by the enemy in preparing for an immediate retreat, and in actually retreating, as far as Stony Creek. At twelve o'clock, the prisoners (amounting to about six hundred) were put in motion, and in the evening of the 23d, arrived at Amherstburg; where "they were penned up in a small and muddy wood-yard, and exposed throughout the night to a cold and constant rain, without tents or blankets, and with only fire enough to keep them from freezing."[2] The dead, who lay where they had fallen,

[1] In detailing the circumstances of this meeting, Major Madison stated to the Secretary of War, that "Proctor's conduct at Frenchtown was as *unmanly*, as at Malden it was *base*"—alluding to his impudent denial, that "any engagements favorable to the prisoners had been entered into by him."

[2] McAffee.

in Frenchtown and its neighborhood, were not merely disregarded, but "formally denied the rights of sepulture, and left a prey to the hogs and dogs of the village;"[1] while the wounded, still more unfortunate, were literally abandoned to the mercy of the savages; who, it was tauntingly remarked, "would be found to be excellent surgeons."[2] Soon after sunrise, the day following, instead of the sleighs which Proctor had promised, and which were anxiously expected, came two hundred Indians, as hideous as yells or paint could make them; who, after plundering the two houses in which the wounded were collected, set them on fire, and repulsing every attempt of the prisoners at escape, burnt the whole to the ground.[3]

Information of this disaster reached the Rapids at twelve o'clock of the day of its occurrence, and produced effects there, which had no tendency to mitigate the evil. The first intention of the commanding General, (who had arrived at this post early on the morning of the 20th) was to push forward such force as could be speedily assembled, interpose it between the flying troops and their pursuers, and save if possible, the wreck of the American detachment. But being informed at the end of a single hour's march, that the retreating party (when last seen by such of the fugitives as had been able to make good their escape) was reduced to less than forty men, much exhausted by fatigue, and hotly pursued by a body of mounted Indians, he abandoned his purpose, and

1 McAffee. 2 Idem. 3 Idem.

committing the service, originally proposed for himself, to a small detachment, he speedily retreated to the Rapids and immediately assembled a council of war. To the wisdom of this enlightened body, it appeared not merely possible, but highly probable, that Proctor would follow up the blow he had already given, and attack the post they now occupied; or, that leaving this behind him, he would throw himself on the head or flanks of the column of the right and the convoys moving in its rear. From such premises, it was not difficult to come to a conclusion—that the post must be abandoned; its defences, and the stores collected in them, destroyed; and the garrison, amounting to eight or nine hundred men,[1] instantly withdrawn behind Portage river. Orders in conformity with this decision, were speedily given and executed, and with this event, virtually terminated General Harrison's second, or winter campaign; which, unfortunately, having recovered no ground we had lost, nor effaced any disgrace we had suffered, utterly failed in accomplishing its objects; and as matter of history, is only remarkable for a waste of money, time, character and life.

Remarks. Of the many errors which signalize this expedition, the first in date as well as in character, was the plan of campaign, suggested by the government, and pursued by the General; and which differed but little from that prescribed to

1 McAffee, p. 236.

Hull, with respect to route, object and means. It may be concisely described as follows:—"Get together a large mass of militia and volunteers; arm, equip, subsist and march them without loss of time through the wilderness; give protection to the frontier, recapture Detroit, and invade Canada." In thus substantially renewing their first and ill-fated plan, the government entirely overlooked, or disregarded the circumstances which induced and justified the first expedition, and the very important changes wrought in these, by Hull's surrender and other causes, in relation, as well to their own condition, as to that of the enemy.

When on the 1st of June, 1812, Hull began his march to Detroit, we had an Indian war to prevent, which could be best accomplished by augmenting our military means in the neighborhood of the lakes; we had several old-established forts on the frontier, which, from different views, it was deemed important to sustain; we had a young and increasing settlement bordering on a British province, which both justice and policy commanded us to protect; we were yet in a state of peace, which enabled us to carry on our operations without interruption; we had the summer before us, from which to select the moments most propitious for crossing the swampy region, which separated us from our objects; and lastly, we had an organized corps, equipped, supplied and ready for service. Such was the state of things on the 1st of June, when Hull began his march for Detroit. But how changed in all respects was it

by the 30th of September—the day on which Harrison reached the St. Mary, and took command of the army and district? It will be remembered, that at this period, we were at open war with Great Britain; that our frontier settlements and posts had been wrested from us; that the Indian tribes of the west, with few, if any exceptions, had taken part with the enemy; that the rainy season had already commenced, and the roads (always precarious) had become difficult to infantry and nearly impracticable for carts and wagons; that the means of both subsistence and transportation, (beyond contract limits) were yet to be provided; that the artillery, destined for the service and indispensable to it, was not farther advanced than Pittsburg; that several corps of the army were also far in the rear, and that all, whether present or absent, required supplies, reorganization and instruction.

The condition of the enemy had also undergone changes, quite as important as our own, but of a character altogether different. In acquiring Detroit, he had become possessed of a fortress, much more defensible than Malden; and in the general issue of the campaign, had completely re-established the allegiance and services of his own militia. In receiving the submission of Michigan, he had acquired the command of such supplies as that territory could furnish, and of as much of the personal labor of its inhabitants, as was necessary to military purposes; and lastly, in securing the attachment of the Indian tribes, he had obtained an ally, of all

others the most important to him, and formidable to us.

That circumstances, thus multiplied and important, all forbidding a prosecution of the prescribed plan of campaign, and all pointing distinctly to the safer, the shorter and more efficient plan of a joint operation of naval and military means, in the spring, were either overlooked or underrated by the cabinet, is not to be doubted; but of this apology, the commanding General has deprived himself by his own written acknowledgments; for in a letter of the 4th of January, 1813, he says, "The experience of a few days, was sufficient to convince me, that the supplies of provision could not be procured for an autumnal advance; and if even this difficulty was removed, another of equal magnitude existed, in the want of artillery."[1] On another occasion, he says, "A suspension of the operations of this army for the winter, without having accomplished the principal objects for which it was embodied, is an event, which has been long looked for by well-informed men, who know the character of the country and recollect, that the army of General Wayne, after a whole summer's preparation, was unable to advance more than seventy miles from the Ohio; and that the prudent caution of President Washington had directed it to be placed in winter quarters, *at the very season when our arrangements were beginning.*"[2]

[1] Harrison's official letter of the 4th January, 1813.

[2] Letter of the 8th of January, 1813.

On another occasion, he says, "From my knowledge of the cost of transportation, I do believe that the expense, that will be incurred in the course of *six weeks* in the spring, in moving the provisions of the army along the roads leading from the Rapids to Detroit, would build and equip all the vessels necessary to give us the command of the lake;"[1] to which, in a subsequent letter, he adds,—"If a small proportion of the sums that will be expended in the Quartermaster's department, in an active prosecution of the campaign during the winter, was devoted to obtaining the command of Lake Erie, the wishes of the government, in their utmost extent, could be accomplished without difficulty, in the months of April and May. Malden, Detroit, and Mackinaw, would fall in rapid succession."

With such decided convictions of what was wrong, in the plan he was pursuing, and of what would be right, in the measure he suggests as its substitute, we certainly had reason to expect, that the General, possessing as he did, a *carte blanche* for conducting the war, would have instantly abandoned his crusade upon the elements and the treasury; taken a new and better frontier on the eastern side of the swampy region; retained barely troops enough to occupy and defend it during the winter, and dismissed without farther ceremony or hesitation, the mass of his militia to their own firesides. Or, if failing to do this, that he would, at least,

[1] Letter of December 12th, 1812.

have made a prompt and full disclosure of the principal facts connected with the case, and of his own impressions under them, without the smallest admixture of other matter, having a tendency to neutralize their effects and keep up a false confidence in a mode of operating, which he thought so obviously wrong.

Had he pursued either of these courses, he would have acted wisely and deserved well of his country; but unfortunately he pursued neither. The hopeless business of transportation was kept up, not merely until its follies and abuses became apparent to all, but until it had actually ceased to be practicable in any possible way; until two teams had become necessary to carry the forage for a third;[1] until two trips, from one blockhouse to another, were sufficient to destroy a whole brigade of packhorses; until the whole route was marked with the wrecks of carriages and their lading, abandoned by their drivers and given up to destruction; until the creeks and rivers had become as impracticable for boats, as the roads were for carts and wagons; and lastly, (notwithstanding these wasteful and injudicious efforts,) until his advanced corps, though not now exceeding one thousand men, were literally starving in his front, and "compelled to subsist from the 10th to the 22d of December, on bad beef and the boiled roots of the hickory-tree."[2]

1 General Harrison's letter of the 22d December, 1812.
2 McAffee, p. 184, 5.

Nor will the time, or the manner, selected by the General for disclosing his opinions and convictions to the government, be more likely to satisfy an impartial inquirer; for though these, as we have seen, were matured as early as the last of September, or beginning of October, 1812, they were not communicated until the December or January following; and when they did make their appearance, were accompanied by so much that shook their authority and even led to opposite conclusions, that the cabinet, not inexpert at deciphering military diplomacy, and peculiarly shy of incurring any responsibility it could avoid, determined (with perhaps less of patriotism than of prudence) to leave the question of continuing the winter campaign exclusively with the General; who, appearing to hold two opinions on the subject, and being already vested with full authority for deciding between them, would, it was presumed, select that, which under all circumstances, would be the safest and best.[1]

But if Mr. Harrison's conduct was culpable in adhering to a campaign, forbidden alike by political and physical reasons, the course he adopted in prosecuting it, was not less open to censure, in a military view; as in this, he scrupled not to violate the plainest and most important maxims of the art he professed; and, with a uniformity, indicating either an entire ignorance of their existence, or an utter contempt for their authority. Of these maxims, we

[1] McAffee, p. 190.

subjoin the following, with a few brief remarks, applying them to the cases to which we refer.

1st. "Of all military operations, winter campaigns are the most to be condemned; because, most destructive to health, temper, habiliments and equipments. The best troops cannot long sustain them." Yet did General Harrison institute a winter campaign, though left by the government to choose between that, and one in the spring; and though affecting to consider the former as doubtful, if not dangerous, and the latter as safe, economical and efficient—thus virtually convicting himself of omitting to do what he believed to be right, and of actually doing what he knew to be wrong.

2d. "Every military expedition ought to have a useful and important object; for without such, however successful it may be, it will be fruitless; and of course, a mere waste of time, treasure and life." By the General's letter of the 12th December, 1812, we find, that "the sole object he could certainly promise to accomplish, was the recapture of Detroit," of which he says, "this will be worse than useless, so long as the enemy hold Malden in my rear, and Sandwich in my front; as from the former, he can intercept my supplies; and from the latter, by a shower of shot and shells, compel me to hide the army, for its preservation, in the adjacent swamps." Yet did the General prosecute a campaign, having this worthless object, and such dangerous consequences!

3d. "In offensive war, a single line of operation is to be preferred; as it keeps your forces in a state that best enables you to make, or to repel attacks." The General, in his wisdom, came to a different conclusion; and accordingly, instead of keeping his force together, divided it into three corps.

4th. "Other things being equal, the shortest line of operation is the best, as it most economizes time and money, and offers to your enemy the fewest opportunities for attack or annoyance." Hull's road would have best satisfied the demands of this rule, as its distance to the point of rendezvous was less, and its central position the safest. Yet to this route, was assigned the smallest and least efficient of the three corps.

5th. "Double, or multiplied lines, are only to be employed when your enemy has committed the fault of forming similar lines exterior to yours." But as in this case, Proctor committed no such fault, the reason, which could alone justify the General's arrangement, did not exist.

6th. "Double, or multiplied lines, whenever adopted, should be kept within sustaining distance of each other; and to this end, their movements must be simultaneous." This maxim, of the first importance in itself, was wholly disregarded; as the General's lines were so far apart, and so deficient in the ordinary means of communication, as in a military sense to be completely isolated. Nor was the last injunction of the rule better observed than the first; as Winchester's march from Defiance to

the Rapids, was made without any corresponding movement on the part of either Tupper or Harrison.

7th. "Military magazines should invariably be formed in the rear of the army they are intended to supply. If established in its front, they invite attacks from the enemy; and if captured or destroyed, compel an immediate retreat." Instead, however, of acting on this rule, the General's constant effort and greatest care, was to accumulate a million of rations at the Rapids, forty miles in front of his central column, and seventy in front of his right wing, and without other protection than Winchester's corps, now reduced by disease or fatigue to eight or nine hundred combatants, destitute alike of fortifications and artillery, and but fifty miles distant from the enemy's main body.[1]

8th. "On a rigid maintenance of discipline, will depend the safety of the country, the preservation of the army, and the successful prosecution of any enterprise in which it may be employed." This maxim is so universally known, and so generally admitted, as to render unnecessary any new illustration of it. It but remains, therefore, to inquire, how far this *sine qua non* of successful war, was attended to by General Harrison? On beginning his career, this officer unfortunately adopted a theory with regard to western militia which, though it sufficiently answered his purpose of displacing a senior officer and securing to himself the command of the army, operated very mischievously on the public interests.

[1] Appendix, No. 7.

In his letter to the War Department, of the 3d of September, 1812, he says, "The backwoodsmen are a singular people. They are susceptible [capable he probably meant] of the most heroic achievements; but they must be taken in their own way. From their affection and attachment, every thing is to be expected; but I will venture to say, that they never did, nor ever will perform any thing brilliant under a stranger." All which, when translated into plain English, amounts to this—the men of the west acknowledge no principle of obedience, stronger or safer, than that of personal attachment to their chief. With them, respect for the government, reverence for the laws, sensibility to the national interest, and even a decent regard to their own characters, avail nothing, unless to all these be superadded, the appointment of a leader "who will take them in their own way"—or in other words, who will gratify their whims, yield to their opinions, overlook their follies, and connive at their faults.

We need hardly remark, that a creed like this, founded on an assumed insubordination on the part of the troops, and an unavoidable compliance on that of the General, is incompatible with every thing deserving the name of discipline; and will never fail to terminate in waste, peculation, disorder, and defeat. Nor were its effects different on the present occasion, as may be seen by recurring to many of the incidents mentioned in the text; and still more distinctly by the following extracts, made from the General's official correspondence; from McAffee's

history of the war in the west;[1] and lastly, from the journal of the late Colonel Wood of the Engineer corps. In a letter of the 12th of December, to the War Department, when assigning the reasons why he did not sooner apprise the government of the impediments that obstructed his progress, he says,—"Though I was always sensible that there were great difficulties to be encountered, &c., I did not make sufficient allowance for the imbecility and inexperience of public agents, and the villany of the contractors." In a second letter, of the 25th of January, in attempting to explain, why, after censuring Winchester so freely for hazarding Lewis's movement on Frenchtown, he directed that officer to hold the position "*at any rate*," he says, "I am persuaded that nothing but a reiterated order would have produced obedience on the part of the troops." If such would have been the effect of a second order, why hesitate to give it? To these sentiments, Wood's Journal is an echo. "In the use of the axe, the mattock and the spade," says the Engineer, "consisted the chief military knowledge of our army." And again:—speaking of Lewis's expedition and the arrangement of the troops at Frenchtown, he adds,—"Not the least regard was paid to defence, order, regularity or system, in posting the different corps." The historian, however, is still more frank in his confessions, than the General or the Engineer, for according to

[1] Report says, this work was principally founded on documents furnished and revised by the General, with a view to his biography.

him,—"*Chaos* and *misconduct* reigned in *every department*, and particularly in that of the *supplies;* in which the best organization and arrangements were necessary to meet the inconceivable difficulties which were to be surmounted in that line. The General had excellent materials for an army in the Kentucky militia; but he had no time to spend in preparing them for the field.[1] The only persons that could be procured as packhorse-drivers were, generally, the most worthless creatures in society; who neither took care of the horses, nor of the goods with which they were intrusted. The horses were of course soon broke down, and many of the packs lost. The teams hired to haul, were also commonly valued so high in coming into service, that the owners were willing to drive them to debility and death, to get the price; and in addition to this, no bills of lading were used, or accounts kept, with the wagoners; of course, each had an opportunity to plunder the public without much risk of detection."[2]

9th. "The General who divides his forces, will be beaten in detail. Officers who have neglected this rule, have generally paid a heavy penalty for doing so. Never, therefore, when acting offensively, make a detachment." In the wisdom and authority of this maxim, the General appeared to concur; as he more than once asserts, that he "made it a rule, never to hazard a detachment that was not in itself sufficiently strong to resist the whole force of the

1 McAffee, p. 141. 2 Idem, p. 184.

enemy." If, however, we test this assertion by facts, we shall soon discover that, in this respect, the General has greatly over-rated his own discretion; and that his actual conduct, so far from observing the rule by which he says he was always governed, was often a direct violation of it.

We have already detailed the progress and fortunes of three detachments, made under his direction, viz., Tupper's two attempts on the Rapids, and that of Campbell against the Missisineway villages; all of which failed to accomplish the objects prescribed to them, either from the deficient number of the party, (as in the case of Campbell) or from the incompetency of the leader, as in that of Tupper. In these instances, therefore, Mr. Harrison was no strict observer of his own rule; nor will his general plan be found to be better conformed to it, than his occasional practice; for, from the moment he divided his army into three corps, and so placed these as to render mutual support impracticable, he virtually converted them into detachments of the worst kind; and of course, subjected them to all the evils incident to subdivision, and himself, to all the censure attaching to so great an error.

10th. "When the head of your line of operation is carried near to your enemy's principal station, it ought to be carefully strengthened; for if it be weak, he will certainly attack and probably destroy it." Such, however, was not the General's opinion; since, far from strengthening Winchester, when approaching the enemy, he would have taken two regiments

from him, and thus reduced the advanced corps to four or five hundred men.[1]

Conduct like this, could only be justified by one or more of the following reasons; that the strength of the whole army was so small, as to forbid an augmentation of any particular part; that the objects to be gained or secured, by re-enforcing the advanced guard, were comparatively unimportant; that the state of the roads and weather, rendered the movement of troops impracticable; or, that the enemy's demonstrations, against other and important parts of the line, not only made a diminution from their strength improper, but justified a recall of a part of the vanguard, for the purpose of strengthening the menaced points. Unfortunately for the General, every fact here assumed, is without a shadow of foundation. The nominal force of the army amounted to ten thousand men; and its effective or disposable force, to six or seven thousand.[2] The object to be attained, (by re-enforcing Winchester) was of the highest importance, as well in itself, as in its consequences; being nothing less than the security of the million of rations, collected and collecting at the Rapids; and without which, in the General's opinion, the expedition must fail. The weather and roads, far from presenting any serious obstruction, were, during twenty days of December, peculiarly favorable;[3]

1 Appendix, No. 7. 2 McAffee's History.

3 Letter from General Harrison to the War Department, of the 4th of January, 1813.

nor was there any thing in the movements of the enemy alarming to other parts of the line. It would be unjust to Mr. Harrison not to add, that he made no attempt to exculpate his conduct on either of these grounds; and had he been equally prudent in forbearing to employ the defence he actually set up, it would have furnished, at least, one occasion for speaking favorably of his discretion. But what can we think of the capacity of a General, who, when the magazines necessary to his own eventual success were in jeopardy, could seriously wish to send back one half of the small corps employed in their protection? And for what purpose? For a pitiful saving, arising from the mere difference between contract and commissariat prices, to be made on the few rations necessary to the subsistence of five or six hundred men![1]

11th. "Every position, taken by an advanced corps in the face of an enemy's army, (if too weak to defend itself) should be promptly abandoned, or speedily re-enforced and fortified." And again:—"No advanced corps should be hazarded, beyond sustaining distance from its own army." Inattention to these two rules, was no doubt the proximate cause of the disaster at Frenchtown, and the subsequent defeat of the campaign. For, who will be hardy enough to assert, that if (after the affair of the 18th) Winchester's corps had been withdrawn, or his posi-

[1] McAffee, p. 193.

tion re-enforced and fortified: or lastly, if Harrison had been within sustaining distance of it, the loss and disgrace suffered on the 22d, would not have been avoided?[1]

The first notice of the expedition to Frenchtown, reached the commanding General on the 16th. Its effects on him and the troops he commanded, is thus described by the late Colonel Wood.—"This news, for a moment, paralyzed the army, or at least, the thinking part of it; for no one could imagine that it was possible for him [Winchester] to be guilty of such a hazardous step. General Harrison was astonished at the imprudence and inconsistency of such a measure; which, if carried into execution, could be viewed in no other light, than as attended with certain and inevitable destruction to the left wing. Nor was it difficult for any one to foresee and predict the terrible consequences which were sure to mark the result of a scheme, no less rash in its conception than hazardous in its execution."[2] What then, we ask, under convictions thus full and distinct, of the folly and danger of the enterprise, was the duty of the commanding General? Unquestionably, to prevent the movement if possible; and if not, to recall the detachment without a moment's delay. Yet were both entirely omitted! No order, forbidding the expedition, was given by Har-

[1] Appendix, No. 9, affidavit of Governor Madison, &c.
[2] McAffee's History p. 228.

rison; nor after his arrival at the Rapids on the 20th, did any issue for recalling the troops. On the contrary, he on that day, despatched his Inspector-General with an order to Winchester, "*to hold fast the position at any rate*," or in other words, *at every risk*,—thus making himself entirely responsible, for whatever consequences might follow.

CHAPTER IV.

Operations on the Niagara.—Partial Armistice.—Renewal of hostilities.—Van Rensselaer's attack on Queenstown.—Smyth's invasion of Canada.—Dearborn's Campaign against the British advanced posts on Lake Champlain.

We have already stated, that to lessen the pressure made upon Hull, and to reinstate the ascendency he had lost on the Detroit, Major-General Dearborn, who, in the distribution of service for the year 1812, had been assigned to the command of the northern army, was directed to make such movements against the British posts in his front, as would have the effect of preventing them from re-enforcing the garrison of Malden; or otherwise altering the relations as to strength, which had hitherto existed between Hull and Proctor. But for this service, the Major-General had made no preparation, and appeared to have little relish;[1] as on the very day on which he was thus instructed by the government,

[1] In the General's letter of the 8th of August, we find an apology for this inaction, quite as unjustifiable as the inaction itself—"*Till now*," he says, "I did not consider the Niagara frontier as coming within the limits of my command,"—an assertion directly contradicted by the armistice entered into between him and Provost, and utterly inconsistent with the orders he received, from the 26th of June, to the 1st of August. For these orders, see Appendix, No. 10.

(though sufficiently apprised that detachments had been sent to Malden, and that the situation of Hull was becoming more critical every moment) he did not hesitate to enter into an armistice, by which he completely disabled himself from giving any aid to that officer; either by vigorously assailing the British posts in his front, (now rendered comparatively weak by the absence of Brock and the troops carried with him,) or by extending to him or his army, the benefits of the temporary suspension of hostilities into which he had entered. Nor did this extraordinary policy, on the part of the General, stop here—for though promptly informed, that the arrangement he had made was disapproved by the President, and though peremptorily ordered to put an end to it as speedily as possible, he notwithstanding, continued its operation till the 29th of August; thus enabling Brock, not only to consummate his victory on the Detroit, but to lead back his detachment and re-establish his defences on the Niagara.[1]

It would be a mere waste of time to inquire into the motives of the British commander, in proposing an arrangement, productive of such decided advantage to himself and his army;[2] but why the American General should have consented to it, in the first

[1] Brock left York on the 5th of August; arrived at Malden on the 13th; received Hull's surrender on the 15th; returned to his post on the Niagara, on the 25th; visited York on the 27th; and early in October was again at Fort George, playing off his artifices on General Van Rensselaer.

[2] For the use made of the armistice by Provost, see Appendix, No. 11.

instance, or continued it in the second, contrary to the express orders of his government? are problems less easily solved. Two official solutions have, however, been given of them, which it is our duty to commemorate; and which, if they do not instruct, can hardly fail to amuse the reader. According to that of the Secretary of War, the General had only mistaken a *private*, for a *public* letter; and presuming that it contained some new and important overture on the subject of peace, hastened to adopt the preliminary measure of an armistice. But however well this solution may account for the General's first step in the business, it entirely fails to explain the second; which must have been made with a full knowledge, that his mountain had not even produced a mouse, and that the despatch to which he had ascribed so much importance, had neither been, nor was intended to be, communicated to the American Government. To supply, therefore, this obvious defect in the Secretary's explanation, we must recur to that of the General, who in a letter of the 27th of August, lets us into the secret that the *ruse* was altogether on his side; that it was now in full operation, and [though it might have deprived him of the power of saving Hull, or of capturing the enemy's posts in his front] was not to be either too much undervalued, or hastily given up; "as he had yet on hand some useful stores which must be forwarded to Sacket's Harbor."[1]

[1] Dearborn's letters of the 9th and 20th of August, 1812.

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But the time had now arrived, when something more important than the transportation of puncheons and packages, was expected from an army impatient of longer inactivity; and loudly, if not seriously, demanding an opportunity of meeting the enemy in the field. To this ostensible ardor, the gallant and successful enterprise of Lieutenant Elliot of the navy, (aided by Captain Towson and a detachment of the army) in capturing two armed brigs of the enemy under the guns of Fort Erie, gave a new and increased impulse; approaching so nearly to a state of insubordination on the part of the militia, that motives of personal safety and reputation, no less than those derived from a sense of public duty, made a compliance with it indispensable.[1] Major-General Van Rensselaer, (the local commanding officer) having accordingly made such preparations as he deemed necessary; and having besides assured himself, that "General Brock had again set out for Malden with a considerable re-enforcement,"[2] selected the morning of the 11th of October, for making an attack on Queenstown—a small village on the Canada side of the strait, defended by three batteries, a few artillerists, two companies of the 49th British regiment, and a small detachment of York volunteers.

The corps designated for this service, and principally composed of militia, assembled punctually and in good order, at the place of rendezvous; and with

1 General Van Rensselaer's report of October 14th, 1812.

2 Idem.

the exception of the weather, which was wet and windy, every thing wore a propitious aspect. But when, after long and patiently abiding the pelting of a north-easterly storm, the embarcation was ordered, and the boats called for, none were found to be in readiness; and on inquiry, it was discovered, that the person having charge of them, had not only withdrawn himself, but had carried with him all the oars, necessary for the service. For this unexpected occurrence, there was no remedy but patience; the expedition was accordingly suspended, and the troops sent back to their cantonments.

On the 13th, the project was renewed, without any essential change in relation to its object, or the mode of obtaining it. The former, continued to be the mere expulsion of the enemy from Queenstown, and the occupation of that village, "as a covering for the American army against the inclemency of the weather;" while the latter, proposed only a hardy attack on that portion of the enemy's line of defence, which confronted the American camp at Lewistown. To effect these purposes, a corps of six hundred infantry, composed in equal parts of regular troops and militia, commanded by Lieutenant-Colonels Van Rensselaer and Christie, were, under cover of the night, to cross the Niagara and carry the batteries by assault; after which, the residue of the army was to follow and occupy the heights and the village.

In prosecution of this plan, the infantry selected for the attack, assembled at the lower, or old French

Ferry, near Lewistown, about four o'clock, A. M.; when, notwithstanding the recent admonition on the subject of boats, it was found that those provided for the present occasion, "were insufficient to transport more than three hundred men at a single trip."[1] Two companies of the 13th United States regiment, forming the right of the line, and commanded by Captains Armstrong and Malcom, were the first embarked; and from good fortune and skilful pilotage, were able to reach the opposite shore without either annoyance or discovery. Other and smaller parts of the same regiment followed, and with equal success, until the whole number who had made good their landing, amounted to somewhat more than one hundred combatants; when it was deemed advisable to quit the shore, and take a position on the first or river bank, and *there* await the arrival of the residuary part of the corps. In executing this movement, noises which could not be entirely avoided, reached the British sentinels on the heights, and produced an immediate and general alarm. A random cannonade, on the course of the Ferry and place of American embarcation, followed; while the two flank companies of the 49th and the York militia, forming the garrison of the post, concentrated their fire (from different parts of the hill) on the ground occupied by the American detachment, and with so much effect, that every commissioned officer belonging to it was in a few minutes either killed or wounded.[2] Lieuten-

[1] Appendix, No. 12. [2] Idem.

ant-Colonel Van Rensselaer, who had accompanied this party, though among the latter and suffering severely, was yet able to stand; and from a first and hasty consideration of the case, directed the men to withdraw, and shelter themselves under the bank; but soon perceiving that a position of this kind was not less dangerous than the former, and wholly inefficient as regarded the enemy, he hastened to issue the wiser and more military order, that "all such as could move, should immediately mount the hill and storm the batteries." Captains Ogilvie and Wool of the 13th, (the former of whom had about this time crossed the river,) promptly undertook the execution of this order, and ascending the heights, turned the British position, seized the battery,[1] and drove the covering party (composed of the two flank companies of the 49th) into a strong stone building near the water's edge. From this fortress, the companies soon after, made two or more vigorous, but unsuccessful efforts, to recover the ground they had lost; in the last of which, the gallant Brock was fated to fall:—a circumstance which, for the moment, gave the American party full and undisturbed possession of the heights of Queenstown.

During the pause that now followed in the combat, several attempts were made to carry over from the American camp, supplies necessary to the further prosecution of the general plan; but so few and insufficient were the means provided for the purpose,

1 This battery was a redoubt, open in the rear, by which the assailants entered.

and so disorderly the employment of such as did exist, that the effects expected from them were very inadequately produced. Of artillery, but one gun could be brought to the west side of the river; of ammunition, but a small quantity; and of entrenching tools, all were forgotten and left at the place of embarcation. Nor was the transportation of the army, more successful than that of the supplies. Two detachments of the 6th, 13th and 23d regiments of infantry, led by Lieutenant-Colonel Christie and Major Mullany, found means to cross,[1] and were soon followed by Brigadier-General Wadsworth and a small battalion of militia; but the mass of this latter description of force was immoveable. Neither entreaty nor threats—neither arguments nor ridicule availed any thing. They had seen enough of war, to satisfy them that it made no part of their special calling; and at last, not disdaining to employ the mask, invented by faction to cover cowardice or treason, fifteen hundred able-bodied men, well armed and equipped, who a week before boasted loudly of patriotism and prowess, were now found openly pleading *constitutional scruples*, in justification of disobedience to the lawful authority of their chief!

While this degrading scene was going forward on the eastern bank of the river, occurrences no less interesting, but of a character somewhat different, were taking place on the western. Between two and three o'clock, P. M., a scattering fire was heard on the southern side of the heights, produced by an Indian

[1] Appendix, No. 12.

attack made on a small party of straggling militia; who being completely surprised, fled in great confusion, and carrying their panic along with them, threatened to extend the infection to other corps. It was at this critical moment that Lieutenant-Colonel Scott of the second regiment of artillery, placing himself at the head of a few platoons of regular troops, charged the savages with a gallantry which soon checked, and at length drove them into a neighboring wood; where the combat became nearly stationary, and a mere trial of skill at sharp-shooting. Perceiving that a *champ de battaille* like this, secured to the Indians all the advantages of their habitual and peculiar mode of fighting; while to his own troops it produced effects directly the reverse, the Lieutenant-Colonel prudently withdrew his party to the open ground; and there took a position which, though it did not entirely put an end to the attack, made it too inefficient, longer to disturb the order of the American line.

A discovery was, however, soon made, that the savages were not the only enemy the invading corps would have to contend with. From the heights of Queenstown, in the distance eastward, was now seen advancing a column of artillery and infantry. Its approach, though slow and circumspect, was steady and unremitting; and of its character and objects there could be no doubts. About three o'clock, P. M., General Sheafe, the successor of Brock and leader of the column, after turning the village and throwing into it a detachment competent to its defence,

presented himself and a force of eight hundred regulars, militia and Indians, in front of the American line—now reduced to less than three hundred combatants, and sustained but by a single piece of artil lery, badly supplied with ammunition. In this state of things, a note was received from General Van Rensselaer, advising an immediate retreat, and promising, on his part, the utmost exertion in furnishing the necessary boats and a covering fire, during the passage of the river; but, at the same time, leaving to Wadsworth (the senior officer on the field) entire liberty to follow the dictates of his own judgment on the occasion. This note was immediately communicated to the commandants of the different corps, and their opinions on the subject requested; but without producing a decision, either for or against, the proposed measure. The British commander in the meantime continued to manœuvre from right to left, and from left to right; countermarching nearly the whole length of the American line twice, as if determined to count every man in the ranks, and to make himself familiar with every foot of the position, before he hazarded an attack. This deliberation on his part gave time for renewed councils on that of his adversary; and a second consultation being held, a determination was at last taken to try the experiment of a retreat, as recommended by General Van Rensselaer.

To have executed successfully, a purpose of this kind, in the face of an enemy so much more formidable than themselves, in numbers, discipline and

variety of arms, would have been no easy task for soldiers the most practised, and officers the most skilful; but was perfectly hopeless, when required from American levies, who had seen only an imperfect service of three or four months. The result was such as might have been, and probably was anticipated by the reflecting portion of the corps; the first step taken in retreat, produced a movement on the part of the enemy, which at once converted the march into a route; and (superadded to the fact, that not a boat was found on the shore ready to receive them) made necessary an immediate and unconditional surrender.

General Van Rensselaer, disgusted with the conduct of the militia, and perhaps not entirely satisfied with his own, withdrew from service, about the 18th of October; when the command of the Niagara or central army, as it was now called, devolved on Brigadier-General Smyth; an officer, from whose patriotic and professional pretensions, the multitude had drawn many favorable conclusions. Nor was the estimate made of his military character by the government, more correct; as it took for granted, a temperament, bold, ardent and enterprising, and requiring only restriction to render it useful. In the orders given for the regulation of his conduct, he was accordingly forbidden to make any new attempt at invasion, with a force "less than three thousand combatants, or with means of transportation (across the Niagara) insufficient to carry over simultaneously the whole of that number."

The interval between the 26th of October and 27th of November, was usefully employed in getting together and preparing the necessary number of boats, and such increase of physical force, as would enable the new commander entirely to fulfil the cautious policy prescribed to him by the government. Having at the last of these dates, sufficiently secured both objects, as he believed, he issued an order, that the army should assemble early on the 28th, at Black Rock, for the purpose of entering on the projected invasion. Nor was there any thing in the state of the weather, or of the river, or in the force and condition of the enemy, seriously to obstruct the execution of this design. The width of the Niagara from Black Rock to the Canada shore, does not exceed a mile—a distance ordinarily passed in a few minutes; the weather was clear and cool, not cold; the outposts of the enemy few and feeble, and too remote from forts Erie and Chippewa, to be promptly sustained by the garrison of either; and of course offering to the invading army an opportunity of breaking down in succession, any detachments sent to their support. Such was not, however, the view of the subject taken by the General; for besides, that no man had more thoroughly convinced himself that the "better part of valor is discretion," he had on this occasion, made a special promise "not to be beaten,"[1] and to fulfil this engagement, determined to risk only a night-attack, with two

[1] Smyth's letter to Dearborn, of the 30th October, 1812.

small detachments, which, whether successful or not, should terminate the enterprise by a hasty retreat to their own shore.

In pursuance of this plan, Captain King of the fourteenth United States regiment, with one hundred and fifty regular infantry, and seventy seamen, led by Lieutenant Angus, was despatched about midnight of the 27th, with orders to attack and carry the British posts at the Red House; while Lieutenant-Colonel Bœrstler, with two hundred rank and file of the same regiment, was instructed to land near the mouth of Frenchman's Creek; assail the guard posted at that place, and destroy the bridge necessary to a communication between forts Erie and Chippewa. From bad pilotage, or some of the untoward accidents which often befall night movements, neither party succeeded in carrying over its whole force. Of King's ten boats, but four reached the point of attack designated for them. In these, were the seventy seamen and an equal number of infantry, who landed under a shower of grape and musket shot. The former, unaccustomed to the order of military movements, and requiring only to be told where the enemy was, rushed forward with their habitual gallantry and appropriate weapons, (pikes and cutlasses,) and after a short but sanguinary contest, carried the position, made several prisoners, threw two pieces of artillery and their caissons into the river, and set fire to the building.

During these occurrences, King with his infantry was not idle. Directing his march on the two extra

rior batteries, which the enemy yet held, he gallantly carried the lower by storm; and on reaching the upper, found it hastily abandoned. After spiking the cannon and destroying the carriages of both, it but remained to fulfil the last injunction of his orders —assemble his party, and recross the river. But to his great surprise, neither on his retrograde march to the shore, nor on his arrival there, was any thing to be seen of Lieutenant Angus, the seamen, or the boats. All had disappeared, and he now found himself in a situation the most painful to a soldier—that of encountering a sudden and unavoidable danger, against which skill and courage could avail nothing. An accident, however, tended to mitigate the evil; for in seeking his own craft, he found two of the enemy's, in which he despatched as many of his party as the boats would hold, but refusing to abandon the remainder, he and they were soon after made prisoners of war.

The explanation of this unfortunate circumstance, offers a new proof of the perils of night movements; and of the great inexperience of our best officers, at that period of the war, in this branch of military service. After the seamen, as already stated, had carried the first object of attack, (not knowing what direction had been given to the infantry of the detachment, and no *signal of retreat* having been agreed upon,) they hastened to the shore, with the wounded of their own party, and the prisoners they had made; when finding but four boats of the ten, (with which the enterprise began,) and these with-

out a guard, and ignorant of the fact, that this number only had made good their landing, Lieutenant Angus concluded, and not unreasonably, that Captain King had anticipated him in the retreat; and accordingly embarking his party, returned to the Navy-Yard, near Black Rock.

Bœrstler's adventures, on this occasion, had in them little of interest, with respect either to what was done, or what was suffered. Mistaking somewhat the point of attack, he effected his landing with three boats out of seven, and without the loss of a man. The British guard being a small one and soon routed, the pursuit was continued towards the bridge, (the destruction of which formed the principal object of this part of the enterprise,) but being now informed by a prisoner, that "Ormsby was in full march, and approaching it," the Colonel contented himself with detaching a Lieutenant and a few men, to effect its destruction; and retiring with the mass of his party to the shore, entered his boats, and recrossed to Squaw Island. The return of both Angus and Bœrstler, in a total ignorance of what had befallen their comrades of the expedition, could not fail to create much disquietude in the army; and induced Colonel Winder to offer himself, with another small party, to go in quest of them. But on approaching the Canada shore, and finding the British batteries re-established and sustained by a body of infantry, he returned to Black Rock, with a loss of six killed and twenty-two wounded.

The result of the enterprise, though sufficiently indicative of the error committed, in departing from the letter, as well as the spirit of the orders given by the government, had no tendency to quicken the General's appetite for a second experiment, upon a larger and more efficient scale. He even now began to doubt, whether the force present and willing to co-operate with him, amounted to the number prescribed by his orders as necessary to invasion; nor did he forget the use, that in his present extremity, might be made of the second injunction of the government, that "no attempt at invasion should be hazarded, without the advice and approbation of his principal officers." While, therefore, he ostensibly prepared for a second attack at another point, and with his whole force, he secretly held a council of war, in which, under different motives,[1] it was agreed, that "the further prosecution of the present plan of invasion, should be abandoned." This decision was promptly followed by a general order, putting an end to the campaign, and directing the army to be placed in winter quarters; when, to complete the gasconade, a flag was despatched to

1 Councils of war are famous for giving bad advice, and hence the maxim adopted by Eugene and Frederick, that the General who resorts to them, seeks only an apology for doing nothing. The decision in this case, was, however, taken on a different principle from that assumed in the preceding maxim; it arose not from a dislike of an efficient course, but from a want of confidence in the skill and vigor of the General.

Fort Erie, requiring an immediate surrender of that post, and its garrison.

The temper discovered by the militia and volunteers, on this termination of the campaign, was highly insubordinate and disgraceful—the General was hissed and hunted from one hiding-place to another ; and at length, compelled to fly for safety to his own home, in Virginia. In noticing this circumstance in his official report, he says—"It has been in the power of the contractor's agent to excite a clamor against the course pursued. He finds the contract a losing one at this time, and would wish to see the army in Canada, that he might not be bound to supply it." Such was the veil, with which he endeavored to cover his own follies and faults.

During these occurrences, the main army, occupying a position on the eastern side of Lake Champlain, and commanded by the senior Major-General in person, continued to slumber on its arms, though both the time, and the policy of adopting measures of offence, had been distinctly indicated by his own increasing strength,[1] by the continued weakness of

[1] On the 26th of September, 1812, there were within district No. 9, commanded by General Dearborn, 13,000 men of all arms. On the Niagara, 3,300 regulars, and 3,000 volunteers and militia ; at Sacket's Harbor, 200 regulars, and 2,000 militia ; and on Lake Champlain, 3,000 regulars, and 2,000 militia. Throughout the campaign, Provost's regular force, covering a frontier of 900 miles, and extending from the Sorel to Fort St. Josephs, did not exceed 3,000 men. See Colonel Cochran's statement, Appendix No. 13. The British commander was, of course, unable to occupy the Isle aux Noix, during the campaign of 1812, or to obstruct the roads leading to Montreal, from New-

his enemy, and lastly, by the urgent character of the orders given him,—"*not to lose a moment in attacking the British posts in his front*,"[1]—yet in despite of considerations so numerous and imperative, no movement of any kind, in the direction of the enemy, was made, till the 20th of November;—and what then was hazarded, was on a scale so small, and for an object so unimportant,[2] as rendered this last act of the campaign, though less disastrous, quite as ridiculous as any of its predecessors.

Of this movement, the historian of the war in the Canadas, offers the following details; which we the more readily adopt, because, not differing materially from those given by our own functionaries, they distinctly show the feeble character of Provost's outposts, and the small disposable force with which he

York and Vermont. Three gun-boats sent out from England, for the defence of the Sorel, could not be employed for want of seamen, till June, 1813. About this time, a small re-enforcement arriving from New-Brunswick, the old fortifications on the Isle aux Noix, were repaired, and the position occupied by a detachment under the command of Colonel Taylor.—*See life and service of Sir George Provost, and Christie's History of the War in the Canadas.* At any time, therefore, during the autumn of 1812, this important post, emphatically called the key of Central Canada, might have been seized and held by the American General, without loss or risk of any kind; as besides abundant means, strictly military, he was authorized, about the middle of October, to buy and equip such number of vessels, as would secure to the United States a decided ascendency on Lake Champlain and the Sorel.

[1] For the orders given to General Dearborn, during this period, see Appendix, No. 14.

[2] This mighty object was the destruction of a blockhouse, occupied by a small party of Indians and Canadian militia.

was able to sustain them, when in November, 1812, he expected the attack of an army of ten thousand men.

"The American army under General Dearborn," says Mr. Christie, "now gradually approached the frontier of Lower Canada; and on the 17th of November, Major Salaberry (commanding on the lines) received information that this army, to the number of ten thousand men, were advancing to Odletown. He immediately despatched *two companies of Voltigeurs* and three hundred Indians, to the support of Major La Force; who, with *two companies* of the *embodied militia*, formed the *British outposts on the La Cole.* The day following, Major Salaberry with the remainder of the Voltigeurs, a corps of Voyageurs, and four companies of Chasseurs, advanced to the neighborhood of the menaced points. By this time the American army occupied the town of Champlain, two or three miles from the line, and a serious invasion was now momentarily expected; but nothing of any consequence occurred till the 20th, when between three and four o'clock, A. M., the Americans were discovered fording the La Cole. The guard-house was soon and completely surrounded; when the *British militia* and a *few Indians*, who were with them, rushed from it, broke through the American line and escaped unhurt. In the meantime, a second party of the Americans now advanced, and mistaking those in possession of the ground for the British picket, a smart firing between the two ensued, which continued for nearly half an hour; when being un-

deceived, they united and hastily retreated, leaving behind them five killed and as many wounded. This party consisted of one thousand five hundred infantry and a troop of dragoons, commanded by Colonels Pike and Clarke; and with the main body of the army, soon after withdrew to winter quarters."[1]

Remarks. The errors which signalize the close of this campaign in the north, are numerous and striking. Those of Dearborn and Smyth appear to have been the result of constitutional defects—barrenness or inactivity of mind in the one, and infirmity of purpose in the other; while those of Van Rensselaer were obviously sins of ignorance, the offspring of that deficient knowledge, which every man must feel, who for the first time, and without any previous instruction, finds himself at the head of an army and on the eve of a battle. Of the former, any new illustration would be unnecessary, as they have been already sufficiently indicated; while of the latter, a special but brief notice may be useful.

I. The false and improbable report of a spy, was made the groundwork of the expedition. "With practised Generals, the credibility of spies is always doubtful, and never confided in, unless sustained by some collateral evidence, furnishing a strong probability in its favor." In the present case, such proof was entirely wanting; and the report itself expressly contradicted by the fact, that the complete success of Brock's late expedition to Detroit, had left no rea-

1 Christie's History of the War in the Canadas, p. 90.

sonable motive for a repetition of the visit; and the less so, as the hourly augmentation of the American army in his front, made the safety of the British posts on the Niagara his most important duty. Notwithstanding these obvious considerations, the knowledge and integrity of the spy were taken for granted, and, in the General's opinion, warranted not merely an attack on Queenstown, but a full dispensation from the employment of all military rules while making it.

II. "Every military enterprise, should have some useful and important object." Yet, according to the General's official report, his views were limited on this occasion, to the expulsion of a small British detachment from Queenstown, and the occupation of that village as winter quarters for his troops—objects which, if attained, would have little if any influence on the progress or issue of the war, while they could not fail to impose upon him the perils of defending throughout the winter, an open and unfortified village; and (what would be worse) the absurdity of placing between himself and his resources, a wide, rapid, and unfordable river.

III. The troops employed, or intended to be employed, on this service, were principally militia; and, therefore, not better chosen than the object itself. Why this was so, is a problem, not yet satisfactorily explained. If it originated in an *esprit du corps*, or belief of militia efficiency, there may be some color of excuse for the error; but, if as reported, the arrangement was made to gratify the ambition of an individual, the act was not merely

injudicious, but criminal. At the period in question, there were at the General's disposition, more than three thousand troops of the line; from whom a corps might have been selected, which, if well found, equipped and commanded, would not have been either beaten or baffled.

IV. "If it be necessary to pass an army over a large and rapid river, in presence of an enemy, *demonstrations* should never be omitted—provided the extent of your own force will justify detaching." That General Van Rensselaer had at this time a redundant force, will be seen by his official report; yet so far from assigning any portion of it to this use, he was even careful so to distribute it as would have completely counteracted this intention, had it existed. Colonel Scott and his artillerists, were called from the Falls, and Smyth and his brigade from Black Rock—points, where, had they been left, their presence would have kept at their posts, the garrisons of Erie and Chippewa, and thus prevented their co-operation in the defence of Queenstown.[1]

V. "Every officer, charged with the direction of a military enterprise, should, before commencing it, assure himself that the means necessary for the purpose, are provided and ready for use." In this case, it was different, as we have seen, that neither boats, oars, nor pilots, had been assembled in sufficient numbers; and, (what is still more extraor-

[1] See Appendix, No. 12.

dinary) that no efficient means had been taken, for ensuring the safety, or regulating the employment, of such of these articles as had been collected.

VI. "An army crossing a river in small detachments and consecutively, exposes itself to be beaten in detail, by an enemy much inferior to itself"—another and important maxim, which, on this occasion, was forgotten or disregarded.

VII. The place selected for crossing the river, was ill-judged. "A sheet of eddies, from shore to shore," as described by the General, and commanded by two of the enemy's batteries, could not fail to aggravate the evil of the preceding error; and both multiply and increase the difficulties inherent in the operation, under circumstances the most favorable.

VIII. The omission to ascertain, previously to the adoption of the project, the political sentiments of the militia on the question of invasion; and that of not promptly recalling the advanced corps, after having ascertained that point, were errors of great magnitude. Both measures were entirely within the General's power, and had they been adopted, would either have prevented the enterprise, or have terminated it at a moment, when, by the death of Brock, and the flight of the enemy, we should have had the credit of a victory, instead of the discredit of a defeat. And lastly, nothing could be more ill-judged than the attempt made to withdraw the corps, after it had lost its ascendency in the field; and when the means necessary for passing the river, or of covering the retreat, no longer existed.

Blunders and faults like those we have been employed in narrating, could not fail to make a powerful impression upon public opinion. With such of our population as had opposed the war, they became a fruitful source of ridicule, and augury of future and greater evils; and with those who had honestly and zealously advocated it, of sorrow and humiliation. These last mentioned feelings were not, however, unmingled with hopes, that a second campaign, under better auspices, and more of preparation than was permitted to the first, would redeem many of its errors, and demonstrate that, though a peace of thirty years might have obscured or blunted the knowledge necessary for conducting the war, it had not utterly extinguished that spirit and aptitude for military enterprise, which so eminently characterized the latter stages of the revolutionary contest; and which even now, began to display itself on the ocean and the lakes.

CHAPTER V.

First investment of Fort Meigs.—Dearborn and Chauncey's Expedition.—Reduction of York and Fort George.—Chandler's defeat and capture on Stony Creek.—Bœrstler's defeat.—Affair of Sacket's Harbor.

WITH the exception of a few unimportant combats on the St. Lawrence, between Forsyth's riflemen and the garrison of Prescott,[1] the first military movements of this year took place in the west. It will be remembered that while Proctor, after defeating and capturing Winchester, was hastening back to Malden, to escape the attacks of Harrison,[2]—this

[1] On the 6th of February, Forsyth with two companies of the rifle corps in sleighs, ascended the St. Lawrence from Ogdensburg to Elizabeth on the Canada shore, surprised the British guard, made fifty-two prisoners, (among whom were one Major, three Captains and two Lieutenants,) liberated sixteen deserters, and made prize of one hundred and forty muskets and a considerable quantity of ammunition, without losing a man of his party. The British commander at Prescott, retaliated this blow on the 22d, by a visit to Ogdensburg; drove Forsyth out of the place (killing and wounding about twenty of his corps, and capturing a quantity of stores and provisions and six pieces of artillery) with the loss of seven rank and file killed, and seven officers and forty-one privates wounded.

[2] Proctor's reasoning on this occasion was sanctioned by military rules. Could it be supposed, that the main body of an invading army was so far in the rear of its advanced guard, as to be unable to sustain it? If not, the circumstances assumed by Proctor were exactly those, in which Harrison ought to have been found on the 23d of January, 1813.

last mentioned officer, from similar apprehensions of his adversary, after setting fire to his stores, baggage and defences at the Rapids, retreated hastily to Portage river. The delusion under which this movement was made, could not be of long duration, and actually yielded to a few hours' reflection on the many embarrassments, from which even victory could not exempt the British commander; severity of weather, roads rendered nearly impassable by snow,[1] ranks thinned by fatigue and battle, prisoners to be guarded, wounded men to be taken care of, and though last, not least, the imperative character of Indian usages, which never fail to demand a debauch, as the first and best reward of valor and victory. Under the influence of these, and perhaps of other considerations leading to the same conclusion, General Harrison, on the evening of the 24th of January, announced to the government, that "a few days would enable him to resume and defend the position he had left, against any thing Proctor could bring against it." Advancing, accordingly, on the 1st of February, he took post on the eastern bank of the Miami; and with a force amounting nearly to two thousand men, began a fortified camp, to cover the head of his intended operations.[2]

Neither these movements, nor the objects at which

1 "From the depth of the snow, those on foot were soon exhausted." —*Harrison's Report of Winchester's defeat.*

2 The General's late experience had taught him a lesson of prudence. He had now, also, the benefit of Colonel Wood's presence and advice.

they aimed, could be long unknown to the British commander; who, to defeat the latter, assiduously employed himself in organizing a corps (British, Canadian and Indian) which, judging from past events, would be competent to the reduction of the American camp, either by direct attack, or by intercepting supplies, coming to its aid and necessary to its support. Leaving Malden, therefore, on the 22d of April, and availing himself of his naval means to cross Lake Erie, and ascend the Miami, he on the 26th, took a position on the western bank of that river, and there began the construction of two or more batteries. These being soon completed and mounted, a fire commenced on the 30th, of sufficient vivacity but of little effect, and so continued until the 4th of May, when a message from Brigadier Clay, arriving about midnight, announced the near approach of twelve hundred Kentucky militia, coming to the support of the garrison. Under this information, the American General immediately determined to risk a project of attack, suggested at once by the dispersed state of the enemy's force, and the incompetent protection given to his batteries. Instead, therefore, of allowing the re-enforcement to form an immediate junction with the garrison, (as Clay intended,) he directed that officer to debark eight hundred of his brigade on the western side of the river, with orders, "to turn and take the two British batteries there, spike the cannon, destroy the gun-carriages, and regain their boats as speedily as possible;" while, simultaneously with this move-

ment, "the remainder of the brigade should land on the opposite shore, fight its way into the camp, and thus favor a *sortie* to be made by the garrison upon the third, and only remaining British battery."

This plan, no doubt, indicated military character, (combination and enterprise,) and was only objectionable from the confidence it reposed in a militia, ignorant of the art of war, and likely from personal habits, to be as insubordinate, as they were unskilful. Still, the first steps of the detachment were, if not circumspect, particularly fortunate; for neither its landing, nor its approach to the batteries, was seen or suspected by the enemy; and so utterly uncovered were their redoubts, that Colonel Dudley, the officer commanding the enterprise, was able to make himself master of two of them, without losing a man. But here, good fortune and discretion alike abandoned the Colonel and his followers; for, instead of confining their attention, as ordered, to the destruction of the enemy's artillery, and the security of their own retreat, they inconsiderately engaged in a bush-fight with a few straggling Indians, who thus contrived to amuse them, until Proctor had time to interpose a strong corps between them and their only means of retreat. The result was such as may be readily imagined, partaking less of the character of defeat, than of destruction; for of the eight hundred combatants, numbered in the morning, but one hundred and fifty escaped captivity or slaughter.[1] The undetached portion of Clay's brig-

[1] Harrison's Report, dated May 5th, 1813.

ade, (led by Colonel Boswell,) though resisted by the savages, effected its object, with little of either loss or annoyance; while a detachment from the seventeenth and nineteenth regular regiments, aided by a few volunteers and militia, gallantly assaulted and carried the battery on the eastern bank, made a number of British soldiers prisoners, and handled roughly, such Canadians and Indians as came to its support.

Though, on the whole, the fortunes of the day were such as furnished the enemy with pretensions to a victory,[1] still the siege, in many of its circumstances, was marked by facts, which, whether considered separately or together, extinguished in the British commander, every hope of eventual success. No part of his calculations had hitherto been verified; his batteries had not only failed to make any serious impression on the American fort, but had all, in succession, been wrested from him; and were at last, but partially recovered through an error of his enemy not likely to be repeated. His allies, also, were found to be incompetent to the service assigned to them; they neither did, nor could, so invest the American camp, as to intercept or even seriously impede the junction of re-enforcements advancing to its aid; and at last, becoming weary of a service, little adapted to their personal habits and military usages, they no longer disguised their intention of speedily abandoning it. If to these motives

1 Provost's letter to Lord Bathurst, 14th June, 1813.

for discontinuing the siege, be superadded the fact, that information of General Dearborn's successful descent at York, in the month of April, had already reached the British camp, we cannot wonder, that Proctor should deem it prudent to abandon all further prosecution of his designs, and regain, as quickly as possible, his position at Malden.

But to this course, however expedient, physical impediments had now arisen: his artillery being of large calibre, could not be transported by land; and the wind blowing strong from the north, prevented its movement by water. To fill up the pause thus made unavoidable in his operations, and to cover at once the defeat of his general object, the retrograde movement he now contemplated, and the apprehension excited by the probability of Indian desertion and American attack, he had recourse to negotiation. The form given to this, was the blustering one employed against Hull—affected humanity, ridiculous menaces, and insolent demands. Despatching a flag on the evening of the 5th, he required the immediate surrender of the American post and army, as "the only means left for saving the latter from the tomahawks and scalping-knives of the savages." Harrison's answer to this proposition was sufficiently manly and decided. Considering it unworthy of a more serious notice, he but adverted to its folly, and admonished Proctor, "not to repeat it,"—thus leaving to his adversary the choice of continuing the contest, or, failing to do so, of virtually acknowledging his weakness or his fears. In making this election,

Proctor did not hesitate long or seriously; the tone and object of his first message, were immediately abandoned, and a simple proposition for an exchange of prisoners, substituted in its stead. Bungling and ill-disguised as these expedients were, they became to the enemy, active and useful auxiliaries; and appear to have effectually concealed his real purposes, until, "a change of wind and a general movement in his camp," made them apparent to all. But it was now too late to profit by the discovery; at twelve o'clock the whole armament, with the exception of the Indians, (who had gone off on the 7th and 8th,) was found embarking and rapidly descending the river.

Harrison's presence on the Miami being no longer necessary, he now hastened back to Sandusky and Franklintown, to organize the means indicated for prosecuting his part of a new plan of campaign, having for its objects—

1st. The reduction of Kingston and York on Lake Ontario, and of forts George and Erie on the Niagara; and

2d. The capture of Malden, and the recovery of Detroit and the Michigan Territory.[1]

In prosecution of the former, two modes of proceeding, differing as to time and means, were prescribed to Major-General Dearborn. The one, (founded on the supposition that Kingston might not be accessible at that season of the year to the

[1] See Appendix, No. 14.

approaches of infantry and artillery,) made provision, that the movement should not be attempted until the navigation of the lake should cease to be impeded by ice; when, by a joint operation of the fleet and army, Kingston, York, and fort George, should be attacked in succession, and in the order in which they are here named. The other, resting on the contrary supposition, that no important impediment arising from snow or ice would obstruct movements exclusively military, directed, that the two brigades wintering on Lake Champlain, and amounting to twenty-five hundred combatants, should be placed in sleighs, and moved under the command of Colonel Pike, by the most eligible route and with the greatest possible rapidity, to Kingston; where (being joined by such force as could be brought from Sacket's Harbor) they should, by surprise or assault, carry that post, destroy the shipping wintering there, and subsequently be governed by circumstances, in either retaining the position or in withdrawing from it."

Though neither of the movements prescribed by these views of the subject was objected to on the ground of any great or unavoidable difficulty in its execution,[1] some reports of the increased strength of the enemy, and of an intention on his part to attack

[1] General Dearborn's letters of the 18th and 25th of February. In the former he says, "Nothing shall be omitted on my part, in endeavoring to carry into effect the expedition proposed;" and in the latter he adds, "Chauncey has not returned from New-York. I am satisfied that if he had arrived as soon as I had expected him, we might have made a stroke at Kingston on the ice; but his presence was necessary for having the aid of the seamen and marines."

Sacket's Harbor, got up by Provost as a mere *ruse* to conceal his own weakness and fears,[1] were unfortunately mistaken by both the Major-General and the naval commander, as furnishing sufficient authority for altogether dispensing with the movement proposed to be executed by Pike; and for so far changing the prescribed order of proceeding in the other, as to make Kingston the *last* object of attack, instead of making it the *first*.[2]

In prosecution of this inverted plan of campaign, General Dearborn (embarking sixteen hundred rank and file of the army) sailed from Sacket's Harbor on the 25th of April, and on the 27th arrived off York,

1 Provost, alarmed for the safety of his western posts, prorogued the legislature on the 22d of February, and set out hastily for Kingston. That he brought no troops with him, and even took from Prescott an escort to protect him in what remained of his journey, are facts well ascertained. Yet was this, and other similar movements, mistaken for evidences of the march westward of large re-enforcements. See Appendix, No. .

2 "To take or destroy the armed vessels at York, will give us the complete command of the lake. Commodore Chauncey can take with him ten or twelve hundred troops, to be commanded by Pike; take York, from thence proceed to Niagara and attack fort George by land and water; while the troops at Buffalo cross over, carry forts Erie and Chippewa and join those at fort George, and *thence*, collect our whole force for an attack on Kingston. After the most mature deliberation, the above was considered by Commodore Chauncey and myself, as the most certain of ultimate success."—*General Dearborn's official letter to the War Department. President's Message*, 31*st January*, 1814. To this change of plan the President gave his approbation, from a belief, that "being on the spot, the General and Commodore were most likely to be possessed of the information which should govern in the case."

the capital of Upper Canada and the headquarters of General Sheafe. The defences of the place were few and feeble, composed of two or three earthen redoubts, four hundred regular troops, an equal number of embodied militia, and between forty and fifty Indians.

Positions having been given to such of the armed vessels as were destined to cover the landing, and take part in the attack of the batteries, the debarkation of the troops began about 8 o'clock, A. M. Forsyth and the rifle corps, forming the head of the column, were the first to make the experiment, and after much effort effected a landing; not, however, as was intended, at the site of the old French fort Toronto, but at a point, more than a mile farther westward, "thickly covered with brush-wood, and already occupied by British and Indian marksmen." In the contest that followed, Forsyth lost some men, but no credit; and being speedily sustained by Major King and a battalion of infantry, and soon after by the presence of General Pike and the arrival of the main body, the enemy were driven from one position to another, and at last compelled to seek shelter in their redoubts. Of these, the first, approached by the assailants, made little resistance; as the occupants, perceiving the storm that awaited them, made haste to abandon the work.[1] The second, presented an aspect of more firmness; but discon-

[1] The Grenadier company of the sixteenth, commanded by Captain Walworth, was proceeding to the assault, when the redoubt was abandoned.

tinuing its fire suddenly and entirely, Pike concluded, and not unreasonably, that his antagonist, by so acting, sought the means of making an overture of surrender; and in this belief, halted his troops at the distance of sixty rods from the battery, when a magazine exploding, burst on the head of the column, spreading its mischief far and wide; killing and wounding more than two hundred men, and creating in the remainder, much temporary alarm and confusion.[1]

Of this circumstance, Sheafe, the British commander, was careful to avail himself. Collecting what of his regular force remained, and leaving to their own resources the civil authorities and embodied militia, he began a hasty retreat in the direction of Kingston. The assailants, who in the meantime, had re-established their order, and resumed their march, were yet in a condition to have overtaken the fugitives, but unfortunately, their gallant leader had fallen a victim to the explosion; the General-in-chief, was yet on board the fleet;[2] and Colonel Pierce, who thus fortuitously became the commanding officer, being wholly uninstructed as to the orders or views of either, permitted himself to be amused by proposals for a capitulation, forbidden alike by the

1 Sheafe asserts, that the explosion was the effect of accident; and states the loss sustained by the garrison in consequence of it, as a proof of the fact.

2 Dearborn, in his letter of the 28th of April, says,—"I had been induced to confide the command of the troops in action to General Pike, from a conviction that he fully expected it, and would be much mortified at being deprived of the honor, which he highly appreciated."

laws of war and the policy of the moment; and thus gave time to Sheafe and his followers, not merely to effect their escape, but to destroy, as they went along, a ship of war on the stocks, and a magazine of military and naval stores in the harbor.

The defence of the town being no longer practicable, a surrender necessarily followed, by which it was stipulated, that the militia and others attached to the British military and naval service, should be paroled; that private property of every kind should be respected, and that all public stores should be given up to the captors. These last, according to the report of the General, consisted of an "immense depôt of supplies, military and naval, and a sloop of war repairing for service."[1] The enemy's loss on this occasion, amounted in killed, wounded and taken, to five hundred men; that of the United States, in killed and wounded, to three hundred and twenty.

The first object of the expedition being thus accomplished, the troops were immediately re-embarked, in the hope that they would be able to proceed to the second and more important, without loss

[1] Of this immense depôt, we hear nothing further from the General, excepting that "so great was its magnitude, that the fleet could not carry the whole away," a fact the less to be regretted, as what they did carry with them, was burnt with many other stores at Sacket's Harbor, through a misconception of the naval officer having charge of the magazines. Our trophies were fewer, but better taken care of.—One regimental standard taken, was, (by some strange confusion of ideas,) sent to the Navy department; and one human scalp, a prize made, as we have understood, by the Commodore, was offered, but not accepted, as a decoration to the walls of the War Office.

of time; but the wind becoming adverse, it was not till the 8th of May, that they arrived off fort George; nor until the 27th, that they were sufficiently prepared for the attack of that post.[1] At four o'clock, A. M. of this day, the batteries on the American side of the Niagara being ready for action, the means necessary for transportation provided, and a considerable re-enforcement of troops drawn from Sacket's Harbor,—the army, (now amounting to nearly six thousand combatants,) began their movement in boats, along the lake shore, to Two-Mile-Run, the point designated for a general landing. When abreast of this, they rested on their oars, till the armed vessels had severally taken their covering positions, and the signal had been given for descent; after which, resuming the movement, they pressed vigorously forward to the shore. At nine o'clock, the light infantry commanded by Colonel Scott, effected a landing; and being speedily supported by Boyd's brigade, and a well-directed fire from the shipping,[2] were soon enabled to surmount the bank,

1 This delay, was at one time ascribed by the General to some sins of omission, on the part of Generals Lewis and Winder,—and at another, to the late arrival of the fleet from New-York.

2 In Commodore Chauncey's report of this affair, he says,--"All the vessels anchored within musket-shot of the shore, and in ten minutes after they opened upon the [water] batteries, they were completely silenced and abandoned." Again; "The enemy, who had been concealed in a ravine, now advanced in great force, to the edge of the bank, to charge our troops, [when] the schooners opened so well-directed and tremendous a fire of grape and canister, that they [the enemy] soon retreated from the bank."

break down the enemy's line in their front, and compel its scattered parts to fly in the direction of Newark and fort George.

On approaching these, Vincent, the British commander, finding the former in flames, and the latter, nearly if not altogether untenable, wisely determined to hazard a retreat in the face of his enemy; and by thus deserting his post, multiply the chances of saving his garrison. Fortunately for him, a contingency of this kind, was neither provided for in the original plan of attack, nor by any subsequent order given on the field; and would, perhaps, have entirely escaped notice, had not Scott, from his advanced position, made the discovery, and deemed it his duty, to institute and continue a pursuit of five miles; not merely without orders, but in evasion of such as were given, until at last, a mandate reached him, of a character so decided and peremptory, as, by leaving nothing to discretion, could not fail to recall him to fort George.

About the time of this last occurrence, the commanding General, who had now landed from the fleet, received information, that Vincent, re-enforced by the garrison of Chippewa and Erie, and a battalion of the eighth or King's regiment, had determined to risk a second combat for the defence of the peninsula; and that with this view, he had called in the militia, and was pressing forward to occupy a strong mountain-pass, called the Beaver Dams.

Though much of this information was unwarranted, by any thing which had been seen of the

numbers, condition, or order of the retreating troops, and though directly contradicted by the report of an officer of the American staff;[1] still, receiving as it did the entire confidence of the General, an order was issued "for renewing the pursuit at daybreak of the 28th, in the direction of the Dams." Of this movement, we need only say, that it resulted in disappointment and mortification,—in disappointment, because on approaching its object, Vincent was not to be found; and in mortification, because it was now evident, that the report, on which the movement was ordered, was a mere artifice employed by the enemy, to put the army of the United States on a wrong track, and thus enable Vincent to anticipate them in the possession of Burlington heights; "a position," without which, according to his own statement, "he could neither retain the peninsula, nor make a safe exit from it."

Under circumstances thus distinctly indicating the policy of the enemy, the American General could no longer mistake his own. We accordingly find him recalling the army, for the purpose of giving to their efforts a new and better direction. One chance, he said, yet remained—"embark the troops on board the fleet, and (should the winds be favorable) they will arrive at the head of Burlington Bay, before the British can reach it; and we shall then close the campaign successfully." But to this arrange-

[1] Letter from Major Van de Venter, A. Q. M. G. to the War Department.

ment, the assent of the naval commander was not less necessary than his own; and though on the 29th, the Commodore saw no objection to the plan, he on the 30th, entirely changed his opinion; and instead of lending himself to a co-operation that would in all probability have been successful, he decided on a movement principally naval in its object, and altogether useless in its effects.[1]

Deprived as the General now was of the aid of the fleet, (which in his opinion furnished the last remaining chance of excluding Vincent from the heights of Burlington,) he was necessarily left to choose between the inaction of a campaign merely defensive on the strait, or the pursuit and attack of the enemy amidst the mountain gorges and defiles, in which they had wisely placed their safety. Of these alternatives, he on the 1st of June, adopted the latter, and accordingly despatched General Winder with a single and small brigade, amounting, in all arms, to somewhat less than eight hundred combatants, to give it execution. This officer, in the progress of his march, was not long in discovering that the enemy's force was more formidable than had been supposed; and very properly decided, to await at Forty-Mile Creek, the arrival of such re-enforcements as, on a representation of the preceding fact, the General might think proper to send to his aid.[2]

[1] His object was the defence of his naval stores and the new ship then on the stocks at Sacket's Harbor—but for the protection of neither did he arrive in time. They were saved by Brown and the garrison.

[2] Burns reports the whole force (after Chandler's arrival) at one

On the 3d of June, Brigadier-General Chandler brought up a second brigade; and understanding that Vincent occupied a strong camp, eight miles in his front, which he was every hour making stronger, the new commander determined to shorten the distance between them, and bring him to action as promptly as possible. The division was accordingly put in motion in the direction of the British camp, and Stony Creek passed by the American advanced guard; between which and an out-lying British picket, a skirmish, of short duration and little importance, ensued. But as it was now sunset, the General found it necessary to halt for the night; and proceeded accordingly to make the necessary disposition of the troops, for passing it in safety. Taking the road as the centre of his line, he there placed his artillery, supporting it on the right by the twenty-fifth regiment, three companies of light infantry, and one of riflemen; and on the left, by the fifth, sixteenth, and twenty-third regiments. Half a mile in his front, was posted a strong picket, and similar guards on both flanks and rear, with orders to send out frequent patroles. In addition to these arrangements, the thirteenth and fourteenth regiments, with Archer's company of artillery, were stationed near the mouth of Stony Creek, (for the better security of the boats and baggage ascending the lake,) and

thousand three hundred men; if, therefore, this report be correct, the force originally sent did not exceed eight hundred, nor the re-enforcement five hundred.

in the rear of the whole, was posted the second regiment of light dragoons.[1]

While Chandler was thus employed in securing his camp, Vincent, who now saw that to retain his present position (on which all his hopes of eventual success depended) another battle must be fought, was deliberating on the mode most proper for giving it; and having found by a careful reconnoissance, made early in the evening, that his enemy's camp-guards were few and negligent; that his line of encampment was long and broken; that his artillery was feebly supported, and several of the corps placed too far in the rear to aid in repelling a blow, rapidly and vigorously struck at their front,—he wisely determined to hazard a night-attack, in the hope of effecting by surprise, what he despaired of being able to accomplish openly and directly.

In pursuance of this plan, the British column (seven hundred combatants) began its march about midnight; and prosecuting it with great silence and much general attention to order, it was able at three o'clock in the morning to surprise and capture every man of the American picket, without giving the slightest alarm to the main body. Nor were its subsequent movements less judicious, though fortunately, much less successful. Selecting the *centre* of the encampment for assault, two small demonstrations (the one, made on the extremity of the right

[1] "This corps (the dragoons) lay at a considerable distance from the scene of active operation, as you will perceive by the enclosed diagram."—*General Lewis's report, 14th of June.*

flank; and the other, on that of the rear guard) were mistaken by Chandler and Winder for real attacks; and had the effect of producing such changes in the disposition made of the American line,[1] as enabled Hervey, at the head of the forty-ninth and part of the eighth British regiments, to gain the rear of the artillery, envelop a part of it, and make prize of some pieces of ordnance, three tumbrils, and about one hundred prisoners—among whom were found the two American Generals.

How much farther the mischief might have been carried, but for one of those accidents common to night movements, can only be conjectured. Vincent, the British commander, quitting for a moment the track of the column which he had hitherto followed, lost his way; and, as is not unusual in similar cases, every effort to recover it, carried him further from his object. It was not, however, until after Hervey's attack had succeeded, that he was missed; when (having been sought for without success) it was not unreasonably concluded, that a fortune, similar to that which had befallen Chandler, had awaited him.[2] Hervey, finding himself in this new and unexpected situation, prudently determined to make sure of the trophies he had won; and, accordingly, began his retreat under cover of the night, leaving to his enemy, the care of his wounded, the burial of his

1 "Hearing a firing in the rear, I instantly ordered Colonel Milton with the fifth, to form in *our rear, near the woods*."—Chandler's report.

2 "He was found the next day, four miles from the scene of action, without hat or horse."—*Lewis's Report.*

dead, and one hundred privates of the eighth and forty-ninth regiments.

Though at daybreak, the American army was found to have sustained some diminution of its nominal force,[1] still, as this was not such as made retreat either necessary or expedient, an order for renewing the pursuit of the enemy, was both desired and expected—but as the capture of Chandler and Winder had unfortunately devolved the command on an officer of cavalry, having no confidence in his own capacity for directing infantry movements,[2] a council of war, to whom the question was submitted, advised "the immediate retreat of the army to Forty-Mile Creek, there to await the further directions of General Dearborn."

This officer, who, from ill-health and other causes, had uniformly committed the direction of field-operations to subordinate agents, seeing nothing in the circumstances of the moment, to render necessary a departure from his ordinary practice, satisfied his sense of duty, by despatching to the army, General Lewis and the sixth regiment, with orders to bring the enemy to action, as promptly as possible.

This new commander reached his destination at five o'clock, P. M., and found the troops encamped

1 The loss of the American army in this action was small, "much less than that of the enemy."—*Report of Colonel Burns.*

2 "Had either of the Generals remained in command, or, if Colonel Burns had been an officer of infantry, the enemy would have been pursued and cut up."—*Dearborn's Report of June the 6th, to the War Department.*

on a plain, "at the foot of a perpendicular mountain of considerable height," whence, at six o'clock, the British fleet was discovered, shaping its course in the direction of Vincent's post;—a circumstance, forbidding, as the General believed, an immediate movement upon that officer, and making it proper that the American army should retain for the night its present position. At daybreak, on the 8th, the hostile armament was found "in a dead calm," about a mile from the shore, and abreast of the camp; while an armed schooner, towed forward to a station favorable for the purpose, opened a fire on the American baggage and boats, drawn up on the beach. But a few discharges of hot-shot, soon convinced the British commander, that the experiment was not likely to turn out advantageously, and thus hastened the recall of the schooner to the fleet.

It was under these circumstances, by no means inauspicious to the eventual success of the expedition, that an order was received from General Dearborn, directing the immediate return of the troops to fort George; from an apprehension, (founded on the appearance of two British schooners apparently employed in examining the shore,) "that a serious attack on that post was meditated by the enemy." This ill-judged order was scarcely executed, when it was found that the "minute examinations" made by the British schooners, had an object very different from that, which the General in his alarm, had ascribed to them. Having in an hour or two, sufficiently ascertained, "that no American vessels,

remained in or near the mouth of the Niagara,' they hastened back to their fleet; which, after landing the supplies and re-enforcement it had carried to Vincent, repaired to the southern side of the lake, and was there, (according to Provost's statement to Lord Bathurst,) "usefully employed in intercepting provision-boats, going to fort George."[1]

The tranquillity, which followed the preceding alarm in the American camp, was unfortunately permitted to become an absolute sleep of fourteen days; of which, the British commander was careful to avail himself. Advancing his main body (now re-enforced by a battalion of the hundred and fourth) to Forty-Mile Creek, he thence pushed forward a party, under the command of Colonel Bishop, "to seize and fortify such mountain passes, as would best secure his own position; and, at the same time, so circumscribe the range of the American troops, as to compel them to live on their own resources."[2] In pursuance of these directions, Bishop began by establishing two posts on the lake road, and one on that of Queenstown; the garrisons of which, with the aid of preconcerted signals, could be readily brought to sustain each other.

The American General, awakened at last by a report of these encroachments, thought it expedient, on the 23d of June, to despatch Colonel Bœrstler, at the head of six hundred men of all arms—dragoons,

1 Provost's letter to Lord Bathurst, 3d of July, 1813.
2 Idem.

artillerists and infantry, to strike at the Stone House, (one of the posts established by Bishop,) about two miles beyond the Beaver Dams, and seventeen from fort George. The result of the movement was such as might have been foreseen. Bœrstler was permitted to reach the Dams without annoyance, but having neither reserve to sustain, nor demonstration to favor him, he was surrounded by enemies, to whom (after three hours' useless fighting) he surrendered himself, and his party.[1]

The reader will recollect, that before General Dearborn thought it safe to attack fort George, he withdrew from the garrison of Sacket's Harbor, the whole of Chandler's brigade, and six companies of Macomb's artillerists, serving as infantry—the effect of which, with the absence of the fleet, left the post (important as it was) in a condition decidedly weak. Provost, whose public duties brought him to Kingston, about the time of this occurrence, was soon made acquainted with it; and believing that it furnished a favorable occasion for retaliating the blows sustained at York and fort George, and for permanently settling the doubtful question of naval ascendency on the lake, he hastened to organize an expedition, having for its objects, "the capture of the harbor and naval stores, and the destruction of the new ship General Pike, then on the stocks."

Fortunately, the disposable force, under the direction of this functionary, was, at that period, not

[1] For Bœrstler's detailed account of this affair, see Appendix, No. 24.

redundant; and on actual muster, could be made to amount to but seven hundred, rank and file.[1] With this small force, a few artillerists and two pieces of light ordnance, embarked on board of small vessels and convoyed by the fleet, the British commander-in-chief began his movement on the 27th of May—"intending to reach the harbor in the night, and at daybreak in the morning, to assault and carry the place by surprise."[2] Retarded by baffling or adverse winds, it was not until ten o'clock, P. M. of the 28th, that he arrived within striking distance of his object; and then, under circumstances, which had entirely changed the relations as to force, previously existing between himself and his enemy. Unable to make the movement covertly, as he had expected to do, some of even his first steps were discovered by the younger Chauncey; who, while hastening back to his post, fired signals of alarm—which, taken up by the guns of the fort, and thus extended to the country, had the effect of bringing together by mid-day of the 28th, six hundred militia in aid of the garrison; and with them, a leader, both sagacious and intrepid, who, like Cincinnatus, was found at his plough.[3]

[1] The detachments employed in the attack of Sacket's Harbor, were, "one company of the one hundredth, one section of the Royal Scots, two companies of the eighth, four of the one hundred and fourth, two of the Voltigeurs, and one of Glengary light infantry, with two six-pounders and their gunners."

[2] Bayne's Official Report, May 30th, 1813, and "Life and Services of Sir George Provost."

[3] General Dearborn, commanding the district, Colonel Backus,

General Brown, the person of whom we speak, having a perfect knowledge of the ground on which he stood, was at no loss to discover the point at which the enemy would attempt to disembark; or the route, by which, after landing, he would endeavor to reach the forts. His dispositions were made accordingly; to the volunteers and militia forming the first line, was assigned the duty of meeting and repelling the descent of the enemy from his boats; while midway between the shore and the village, and on ground made difficult of approach by fallen timber, was placed the second line, composed of regular troops,[1] amounting to four hundred combatants, commanded by Lieutenant-Colonel Backus. Still further in the rear, were a few artillerists, charged with the custody of the forts, which, in the General's plan of defence, formed his dernier resource.

Such was the disposition made of the small American force, when at daybreak of the 29th, the enemy's fleet was seen in line, between Stony Point and Horse Island; and his troops, in small craft, covered by gun-boats, making for the southern side of a sandy ridge, thrown up by adverse currents, and occasionally forming a causeway between the island

senior officer of the United States troops at the Harbor, and Major Swan, acting Adjutant-General, had previously united in urging General Brown, a militia officer residing in the neighborhood, to take the command, in the event of an attack on the post.

1 Detachments from the first dragoons, ninth and twenty-third infantry, and a few artillerists.

and the main land. To meet this movement,[1] the volunteer regiment stationed on Horse Island, was promptly withdrawn, and made to take a position on the shore, adjacent to that occupied by the militia; when orders were given to both corps, "to conceal themselves as much as possible; to reserve their fire until the enemy's approach should enable them to count his coat-buttons; and, if driven from their ground, to rally in the adjoining wood, attack the enemy's flank, and, if unable to stop him, to retire on the left and rear of Colonel Backus's position, and there await further orders." Unfortunately, no part of these directions were complied with. A fire, much at random and given prematurely, was followed by a flight, nearly general, of both parts of the first line, and with such determination to avoid new dangers, that every attempt at rallying either, proved unsuccessful.[2]

For this unmanly and unexpected conduct on the part of the militia and volunteers, the General found himself greatly consoled by the coolness and courage of the regular troops, who, though compelled to abandon their first position, hastened to occupy

1 "It was my intention to have landed in the cove, formed by Horse Island; but on approaching, we discovered that the enemy were fully prepared, with a very heavy fire of musketry, supported by a field-piece. I therefore directed the boats to pull round to the other side of the island, where a landing was effected in good order, and with little loss."—*Bayne's Report, May 30th*, 1813.

2 General Brown's official letter, of June 1st, 1813. The only exception to this conduct in the militia and volunteers, was found in the parties headed by Captains McNitt and Collins.

another, which, in their hands became impregnable; and soon brought the British commander to the conclusion, that "the reputation and interest of his Majesty's arms, would be best promoted by an immediate retreat."[1] This was accordingly ordered and executed; leaving, as was his custom, his killed and wounded on the field of battle, as new subjects for the exercise of the humanity of his antagonist. On this fortunate issue of a business, involving so many high interests, and so little promising in the outset, we find but one drawback—the burning of the naval stores, storehouses and barracks—an effect of false information, imprudently given and too hastily believed, by the officer charged with the custody of these buildings.

The affair of Sacket's Harbor was followed by an attack of similar character and fortune, on Black Rock; and which, though having little, if any bearing on the progress or issue of the war, may, notwithstanding, be entitled to a brief notice. Colonel Bishop, commanding the *élite* of General Vincent's division, encouraged as well by the diminished strength, as the uniform inaction of the American army, pushed his enterprise onward to the Niagara,

1 "At this point, the further energies of the troops became unavailing; the block-house and stockaded battery could not be carried by assault, nor reduced by field-pieces, had we been provided with them. Seeing no object within our reach, that could compensate for the loss we were momently sustaining, I directed the troops to form on the crest of the hill; and from this position, we were ordered to re-embark." —*Bayne' Reports.*

and finding fort Erie without a garrison, hastened to re-establish himself in that post. Being now within sight of Black Rock, and informed that it was the depository of a considerable quantity of public stores, he determined to make it a visit; and on the 11th of June, crossed the river at the head of two hundred and fifty men, of the eighth, forty-first, and forty-ninth regiments. The militia in charge of the place, and nearly as numerous as the enemy, being *non-combatants*,[1] withdrew at his approach, and permitted him to execute his purposes without hindrance or molestation. Having at last accomplished his objects, spiked the heavy cannon, carried off the light ones, loaded his boats with flour and salt, and burned to the ground, both barracks and block-houses, he withdrew to the shore, with the intention of embarking himself and his party, when he discovered, that he had yet, like Cæsar at Munda, to fight for his life.

A report of the predatory character of the expedition, spreading rapidly through the country, had the effect of assembling at Buffalo, about one hundred and fifty United States infantry, as many militia and a few Indians, who immediately set out to recapture the public stores, and punish the invaders of the soil. For the first of these purposes, their arrival was too late—the plunder having been al-

1 An effect of the eastern doctrine (on the causes and character of the war) industriously circulated in the northern and western frontiers of New-York.

ready secured; but for the last, it was yet in good time, and after a contest made as brief by the fall of Bishop, as it had been vigorous while he lived, the British party was compelled to fly to their oars and recross the river; leaving behind them nine of their number killed and fifteen wounded. At other points, the enemy pursued his purposes with better effect; and at last, virtually reduced fort George from a fortress, into a prison, with limits, little, if at all exceeding the range of its cannon.

To account for a state of things so unexpected, and falling so far short of the promises held out by the General and the naval commander, when they began the expedition, we subjoin the following extract from an official despatch of the former, of the 20th of June. "From resignations, sickness, and other causes, the number of regimental officers present and fit for duty, is far below what the service requires. A considerable portion of the army being new recruits, and the weather very unfavorable to health, the sick have become so numerous, in addition to the wounded, as to reduce the effective force far below what could have been contemplated. The enemy have been re-enforced with about five hundred men of the one hundred and fourth regiment; whence I conclude, that he will endeavor to keep up such a plan, at, and near the head of the lake, as will prevent any part of our force in this quarter from joining, or proceeding to Sacket's Harbor, for the purpose of attacking Kingston; and such is the state of the roads in this flat country, in consequence

of continual rains, as to render any operations against the enemy extremely difficult, without the aid of a fleet, for the transportation of provisions, ammunition and other necessary supplies. The enemy would probably retreat on our approach and keep out of our reach, being covered by one or more armed vessels. The whole of these embarrassments have resulted from a temporary loss of the command of the lake." [1]

The accounts of the General's health, were not more encouraging than that given of the condition of the army. In a letter of the 4th of June, he says, —"I am still very feeble, and gain strength very slowly." June the 6th, "I never so severely felt the want of health as at present; a time when my services might perhaps be most useful." June the 8th, "My ill state of health renders it extremely painful to attend to current duties, and unless it improves soon, I fear I shall be compelled to retire to some place where my mind may be more at ease." June the 14th, "General Dearborn, from indisposition, has resigned the command,—not only of the Niagara army, but of the district. I have doubts whether he will ever again be fit for service."[2] "As the General is unable to write, I am directed to inform you, that in addition to the debility and fever he has been afflicted with, he has, within the last twenty-four hours, experienced a violent spasmodic attack on his

[1] General Dearborn's letter to the War Department, of the 20th of June, 1813.

[2] General Lewis's letter of the 14th of June, to the Secretary of War.

breast, which has obliged him to relinquish business altogether."[1]

It cannot be thought extraordinary, that under circumstances so alarming, as well in relation to the General as to the troops, an order should have issued on the 6th of July, recalling the former from the command of the district;[2] and enjoining on his successor, "not to prosecute any offensive operation, until our ascendency on the lake was re-established."

Remarks. We have seen that, by the plan of campaign prescribed to General Dearborn, *Kingston* was made the first object of attack; after which (if successful) the army should proceed to the reduction of York, fort George and fort Erie. This arrangement, so far as regarded the order of attack, was recommended by considerations the most decisive; inasmuch, as the capture of the first named of these posts, would have involved that of the British fleet, (then frozen up in its harbor;) the entire separation of Lower from Upper Canada; the necessary fall of all military and naval armaments within the latter,

1 Letter from Colonel Connor, Aid-decamp of General Dearborn, of June the 12th, to the Secretary of War.

2 This act of the Executive authority, originated with that portion of the House of Representatives most active and influential in supporting the war; who, believing that habitual ill-health on the part of the General, disqualified him from such a discharge of his duty as the exigencies of the service required, deputed Messrs. Clay and Ingersoll to represent their views on the subject to the President. Mr. Monroe became the medium of communication between these gentlemen, and Mr. Madison, coinciding in their opinion, soon after directed the General's recall.

and a speedy termination of the Indian war in the west—advantages not to be expected from the most successful operations against York, fort George, or fort Erie.

Nor will it appear that on receiving this order, the General put a different estimate on the practicability of the project, or on the value and importance of the objects it presented. In his letter of the 18th of February, he says—"Nothing shall be omitted on my part, in endeavoring to carry into effect the expedition proposed;" and in that of the 25th he adds, "Chauncey has not yet returned from New-York; if he had arrived as soon as I expected him, we might have made a stroke at Kingston on the ice; but his presence was necessary for having the aid of the marines and seamen."[1] Unfortunately, this coincidence of views between the government and the General was of short duration. On the 3d of March, he became "satisfied, on information, (as he declared,) *entitled to full credit*, that a force had been collected from Quebec, Montreal and Upper Canada, of from *six to eight thousand men, at Kingston;* and that an attack would be made on Sacket's Harbor within forty-eight hours, perhaps sooner." Again, on the 9th, (though then entertaining doubts whether

[1] What an extraordinary reason to be given by the commanding General of an army and district, (of which Sacket's Harbor made a part,) for omitting to execute an order directly emanating from the President of the United States! Did Mr. Chauncey leave the fleet without a commander *de facto?* And if not, what rendered his authority over seamen and marines less efficient than that of the Commodore.

Provost would hazard an attack,) he announces to the government, that "this unexpected movement of the enemy, would effectually oppose the measures contemplated on our part." And in conformity with this desponding view of the subject, a council of war, held on the 15th of March, decided, that "no attempt upon Kingston should be made before the naval force could act;" or, in other words, before the lake was navigable;—a decision, which, besides putting an end to Pike's expedition on the ice, gave to Provost all he wanted—an entire month to strengthen his defences, and a thaw, to restore Yeo and his fleet to their ordinary activity and usefulness. After thus demolishing the most important part of the plan of campaign, it was not to be expected that what remained of it would be treated with more ceremony. "To take," says the General, "or destroy the armed vessels at York, will give us the complete command of the lake. Commodore Chauncey can take with him ten or twelve hundred troops, to be commanded by Pike; take York, from thence proceed to Niagara and attack fort George by land and water, while the troops at Buffalo cross over and carry forts Erie and Chippewa and join those at fort George, and then collect our whole force for an attack on Kingston. After the most mature deliberation, the above was considered by Commodore Chauncey and myself *as the most certain of ultimate success.*"[1]

[1] Of this plan, we have the following estimate by General Pike and others. "The opinion of General Pike, founded on a knowledge of General Dearborn's intended movements, is, that our country is

It will not be easy, perhaps impossible, to give any sufficient reason for the course thus recommended, and eventually adopted, by the two commanders. If they continued to believe, that Provost had assembled from "six to eight thousand men at Kingston, for the express purpose of attacking and destroying Sacket's Harbor," as stated by the General in his despatch of the 3d of March—what could justify a project on their part, which would necessarily abstract a large portion of the military and the whole of the naval force, from this menaced point? If, on the other hand, they had ceased to give credit to a fable so absurd, (which is most probable,) and had returned to the opinion, that "the garrison of Kingston was weak,"[1] why not return also to the intention of carrying the attack on that important post, and thus have fulfilled the original plan of campaign?

It now but remains for us to show, that the information taken by the General as the guide of his opinions and conduct on this occasion, was wholly unfounded. Our proofs on this head are, I. "That Provost, on arriving at Prescott, borrowed from that post an escort of soldiers, to prevent his being kidnapped on his way to Kingston"[2]—a fact, utterly in-

again doomed to defeat, if the operations now meditated by the General are attempted to be accomplished. The opinion is also prevalent with the best officers, that no conquest of character will be made, if your plans of invasion be subject to the continual wavering of the commanding General."—*Letter from Major Van de Venter, D. G. M. G., of the 31st March, 1813, to the Secretary of War.*

1 General Dearborn's letter of the 14th of February, 1813.

2 Christie's History of the War in the Canadas, p. 101.

consistent with the story of his having brought with him, large detachments from Quebec and Montreal;[1] that Proctor, Barclay, Vincent, and Sheafe, so far from being in a condition to yield any aid to the supposed project of an attack on Sacket's Harbor, were themselves in great want of re-enforcements—the former, postponing on that account, an attack which he had been ordered to make on Perry's fleet, while fitting out at Presque Isle;[2] that when late in the month of May, the British commander-in-chief (induced by the continued absence of the American fleet and army at the head of the lake) made an attack on Sacket's Harbor, he was unable to bring against that post, more than *seven hundred* combatants,—a conduct, utterly unaccountable in an old soldier, having at his disposition a corps of either six or eight thousand men; that the maximum of the British regular force at Kingston, in 1813, was one thousand men,—a fact ascertained by the late Major-General Brown during the war, and subsequently, on a visit to that place.[3] And lastly, that Sheafe's papers, taken at York and examined by the late Colonel Connor, Aid-decamp to General Dearborn, "showed satisfactorily, that the garrison of Kingston, during the winter and spring of 1813, was *weak*, and *much below the force necessary to its defence*."[4]

1 Christie's History of the War in the Canadas, p. 101.

2 Letters of Provost and De Rottenburg to Proctor and Barclay, Appendix, No. 19.

3 Appendix, No. 16.

4 Appendix, No. 17.

II. The error next in date, as well as in magnitude, was that of omitting to make any competent provision for preventing the escape of the two British garrisons, the one from York, the other from fort George; an object, which, had it been accomplished, would have given us a complete command of the peninsula, and necessarily prevented those blunders and misfortunes, the occurrence of which, so completely verified the prediction of the much and justly lamented Pike.

Had the commander-in-chief in the first of the above mentioned cases, been on the field of battle or near it, or had he made Colonel Pierce acquainted with the orders given to Pike, (as he ought to have done,) the unnecessary delay made in the pursuit of the enemy would not have occurred; and in this case, Sheafe and his followers would, in all probability, have been overtaken and captured. Again, in the other case, if, instead of concentrating his whole force, naval and military, on the water-side of the enemy's defences, he had divided the attack, and made Chandler's brigade, Macomb's regiment, and Burns's cavalry, with a few pieces of artillery, cross the Niagara below Lewistown, and advance on fort George by the Queenstown road, the investment of that place would have been complete, and a retreat of the garrison impracticable. That this important duty should have escaped the General's notice is the more extraordinary, as the Secretary of War, in a letter of the 15th of May, 1813, had sufficiently apprised him of what would be the obvious

policy, and probable conduct of his adversary, should he find himself compelled to choose, between giving up his fortress, or saving his garrison.[1]

III. To correct the preceding error, the army was ordered to march on the 28th, to the Beaver Dams, in the belief that Vincent, after calling in his outposts, would make a stand at that point; but, unfortunately, though the pursuit was right, the direction given to it was wrong. Of the two routes in the General's choice, that known by the name of the Lake-road, would have placed him two miles in Vincent's rear; and would of course, have compelled that officer (had he committed the blunder ascribed to him) to fight a battle, with a force greatly superior to his own, when, on the contrary, if approached by the Queenstown route, a direct and uninterrupted retreat would have been left open to him.

IV. The effect of this false movement, besides unnecessarily trying the strength and patience of the troops, was the loss of two entire days to the pursuit. Two others (the army being now recalled to fort George) were given to the consideration of some expedient, which should best indemnify us for the time and labor thus thrown away. The General's own wish, was to avail himself of the fleet, to carry the army to Burlington Bay; but the high destiny of that arm, on this, as on a later occasion, gave it a different and less useful direction. Left, therefore, without a choice of measures, he at last adopted one, (a march on the enemy by the Lake-

[1] Appendix, No. 18.

road,) which ought to have been taken at daybreak of the 28th. But here, the General defeated the wisdom of his own decision by the means employed to execute it; for, instead of sending a force competent to the service required, he on the 1st of June, under some extraordinary delusion, despatched only a single and small brigade to combat a force, which, according to his own estimate on the 28th of May, required the presence and co-operation of nearly the whole army.

V. Doubting, at last, the sufficiency of Winder's brigade, the General on the 3d of June, despatched a second, which, with its precursor, reached Stony Creek in the evening of the 5th, when it was decided that the army should halt for the night. Chandler, who was now the leader of the enterprise, finding himself but six miles from the enemy, concluded, and not unreasonably, that if Vincent intended to give battle, he would make the attempt during the ensuing night; and under this impression, hastened to call into exercise all his generalship to meet that contingency. Pickets were accordingly placed in front and rear, and on both flanks; while a chain of sentinels encircled the camp. Yet, with all these precautions, the camp was surprised, a portion of its artillery taken, and one hundred prisoners made, among whom, were the two Brigadiers. A misfortune like this, must have had a cause, or causes, worth inquiring into; with regard to which, we offer the following suggestions:—

1st. "If a General take a position in the neighborhood of an enemy, from whom a night-attack may be expected, his first care ought to be, to keep his force together, and so placed, that its several parts may be promptly brought to sustain each other." This maxim does not appear to have been sufficiently attended to. The thirteenth and fourteenth regiments, composing the boat and baggage guard, were stationed three miles from the encampment; and the cavalry so placed as to be unable to act.[1] Why the position given to the boat-guard, had not been taken as the ground of encampment for the whole detachment, is not very apparent; for here, besides the advantages of concentration, the General would have found himself three miles nearer his object; on the very route, by which he intended moving in the morning; and with flanks and rear, well secured by the lake and the creek, against the night-attack he expected.[2]

2d. "It is not enough that patroles and pickets be established against night-attacks. These parties should be frequently visited by the General himself, or by some one of his staff, who will be careful to enforce the orders already given, or issue new ones accommodated to such change of circumstances as may have arisen in the case." Had such a supervision been exercised on the present occasion, it is quite impossible, that an entire picket would have

1 Burns's Report to General Dearborn.

2 Chandler's Report to General Dearborn, of the 18th of June.

been caught asleep on its post; or that fires, ordered to be extinguished in the evening, should have been found burning at daybreak.[1]

3d. "In night operations, when the eye can do little, false attacks may be mistaken for real ones—but even in this case, the ear of a practised soldier cannot long be deceived—for if the onset be neither vigorous nor extended, it may at once be considered as false." Vincent's demonstrations were of this kind, few and feeble; and making no serious impression but upon the two Generals—who, mistaking them for the main attack, drew off the fifth regiment from the centre of the line, and thus left the artillery unsupported.

4th. The next blunder in this comedy of errors, must be ascribed to Burns, on whom the command of the army had devolved, in consequence of the capture of Chandler and Winder. When, at daybreak, this officer was called to exercise his new functions, he found, as he tells us in his official report, that "all the views of the enemy had been completely frustrated; himself obliged to fly, leaving the field of battle covered with his dead and wounded, and more than seventy men, principally of the forty-ninth, made prisoners:" while, on the other hand, the troops of the United States had suffered little loss, were in perfect order, and entirely in condition, had not both Generals been taken, to have pressed Vincent to a second combat, the issue of which,

1 Chandler's Report to General Dearborn, of the 18th of June.

would not have been doubtful. Yet, in despite of all these discoveries, our modest cavalier (from sheer diffidence in his own capacity to direct infantry movements) refused to avail himself of the advantages he possessed, and, instead of longer pursuing the objects of the expedition, turned his back at once on Vincent and victory, and hastily retired to Forty-Mile Creek; thus practically contradicting his own official statements, and giving to the affair of Stony Creek, the new and unmerited character of a positive defeat on our part.

5th. But little more mismanagement was now wanting, to make the campaign of 1813, as much a subject of ridicule at home, and contempt abroad, as that of the preceding year. Nor had we long to wait for such new instances of misconduct, as could not fail to produce this degrading effect. On the 6th of June—the day on which Burns was flying, when none pursued—an order was received from the commander-in-chief, recalling without loss of time, the whole army to fort George, and virtually abandoning all the objects of the campaign. Nor was even this ill-judged movement executed, without a disorder which entailed upon it, the loss of "twelve boats, principally laden with the baggage of the army."[1]

These events were soon known and justly appreciated by the British commander, who, advancing as we retreated, was willing on the 20th of the

[1] General Lewis's Letter of the 14th of June, 1813.

month, to hazard the *élite* of his army (about five hundred combatants) within stroke of his adversary.[1] Every just view of this circumstance, indicated the wisdom of immediately assailing this corps; the capture, or destruction of which, would have effectually defeated the present views and future operations of Vincent. But unfortunately, though the General adopted this opinion, he altogether failed, as in other cases, in the employment of means, proper for giving to the experiment a successful issue. Instead of placing, as he ought to have done, Scott and Miller at the head of fifteen hundred men each,[2] and moving them by a night-march and the shortest route on De Coos's station, he despatched Bœrstler (an officer not distinguished by any prior service) with five hundred and forty effectives only, by the Queenstown road, in open day, without reserve or demonstration of any kind, either to sustain the attack, or cover the retreat![3]

1 The Stone House, called De Coos's station, was seventeen miles from fort George.

2 The effective strength of General Dearborn's army, amounted at this time, to three thousand five hundred combatants.

3 Bœrstler's detailed account of his misfortune, has never, so far as we know, been given to the public. It is, perhaps, due to his memory, that it should now be published. The reader will find it in the Appendix, No. 24.

CHAPTER VI.

Second investment of Fort Meigs.—Gallant defence of Fort Stephenson.—Defeat of the British fleet on Lake Erie.—Capture of Amherstberg.—Recapture of Detroit and the Michigan Territory.—Harrison's pursuit and defeat of Proctor.—Arrival of a part of the Western Army on the Niagara.

ALARMED by the reports in circulation of Perry's progress in building and equipping armed vessels at Presque Isle, Proctor and Barclay, early in the spring, projected an attack on that post; but for this purpose, an augmentation of their several means was deemed indispensable. The General, accordingly, called for a re-enforcement of regular infantry, and the Commodore, for an additional number of practised seamen; but though the enterprise was promptly approved by Provost, and entirely conformed to views previously given by him, so weak at the moment was the British central division on Lake Ontario, that an immediate compliance with either branch of the requisition was impracticable; nor was it till about the 10th of July, that "sixty seamen and four hundred infantry" could be sent to the division of the west.[1]

In the meantime, to avoid a state of inaction, and

[1] See letters of Provost and De Rottenburg, Appendix, No. 20.

to give employment, in particular, to a great mass of restless Indians, which had been assembled at Malden in March and April, Proctor began the campaign with a demonstration on fort Meigs, from which he expected the following results; 1st, That Clay, and his garrison, made up of insubordinate militia, might be provoked or seduced to quit their intrenchments, and take the risk of a field-fight with him and Tecumseh; and 2d, that by seriously alarming Harrison (then at Lower Sandusky) for the safety of his outpost and stores on the Miami, that officer would be induced to march to their defence; and thus losing the power of sustaining fort Stephenson, Cleveland and Presque Isle, render certain and easy the capture of those places.[1]

With these views, the British commander began his movement at the head of a force, regular, militia and Indian, amounting to four thousand combatants;[2] with which, on the 22d of May, he appeared before fort Meigs. But perceiving early, that his stratagem in relation to that place, was not likely to succeed, and that what remained of his plan might be jeopardized by delay, he on the 28th, raised his camp; sent back a part of his allies to Malden, detached another and larger portion to watch and waylay Harrison, and with the residue of his force, white and red, hastened to the attack of Lower Sandusky. Nor could circumstances more propitious be imagined, than those under which he found this nominal

1 See letters of Provost and De Rottenburg, Appendix, No. 19.

2 Christie's History of the War in the Canadas, p. 117.

fortress,—injudiciously placed and badly constructed, neither finished nor furnished, and even stripped of a part of its ordinary armament,—with a small garrison not exceeding one hundred and fifty men, under orders to retreat, "should the enemy approach in force and with cannon, provided *a retreat should then be practicable*."

Fortunately for the credit of the American arms, the first step taken by Proctor was that of isolating the fort by a cordon of Indians; thus rendering the retreat of the garrison highly perilous, if not impracticable, and leaving to the commander a choice only between submission and resistance. In making this selection, the young and gallant Croghan did not hesitate; and to the demand of a surrender, enforced by the usual menace of indiscriminate slaughter in case of refusal, he answered substantially,—that the defence of his post was a point of honor, which could only be satisfied by an actual experiment of the relative force and fortune of his antagonist and himself.

While this negotiation was in progress, Proctor was employed in landing his artillery and giving it a position in aid of his gun-boats; from which, on the delivery of Croghan's answer, a heavy fire was opened and continued on the fort, with little if any intermission during the night. At daybreak, a second battery of three six-pounders was established within two hundred and fifty yards of the pickets; and about four o'clock, P. M., it was found that the whole fire of the British cannon, was concentrated on the north-west corner of the fort—a circumstance, sufficiently

indicating the point and species of attack meditated upon it. Major Croghan, accordingly, hastened to employ such means as he possessed to strengthen the menaced angle,[1] and had barely executed his purpose, when the enemy (covering himself with smoke) was seen rapidly advancing, and but a few paces distant from the pickets. A general and well-directed fire of musketry from the garrison, which immediately followed this discovery, had the effect of checking his progress and considerably disturbing his order; but the latter being speedily restored, the movement was resumed, and the ditch reached and occupied by the head of the column. It was at this critical moment, that Croghan's single piece of artillery, charged with grape-shot and so placed as to enfilade the assailants, opened its fire and with such effect, that in a few minutes, the combat was virtually ended and the battle won.[2] Most of the enemy who had entered the ditch, were killed or wounded; and such of them as were less advanced and able to fly, sought safety in the neighboring woods—carrying with them no disposition to renew the attack, and strongly impressing their Indian allies with their own panic. Proctor now saw, that all attempts to rally the fugitives were hopeless; and that to avoid a greater calamity,[3] his most prudent course would

1 Bags of flour and sand.

2 The cannonade and bombardment lasted thirty-six hours.

3 A fear that Harrison would quit his camp at Seneca, and pounce upon him in his then crippled state. It is worthy of notice, that of these two commanders, (always the terror of each other,) one, was

be, to re-embark what could be collected of his force, red and white, and return immediately to Malden. His retreat began accordingly at three o'clock in the morning, leaving behind him a note, recommending to American humanity the burial of his dead and the care of his wounded.

The enemy's movements not immediately requiring further attention from General Harrison, he now became actively and exclusively occupied, in bringing together such militia, in aid of the regular troops assigned to his command, as was deemed competent to the objects of the campaign. To this service, the popular and patriotic Governors of Kentucky and Ohio lent themselves freely and successfully; and by the 15th of September, the army collected on the southern shore of Lake Erie, and destined to a new invasion of Canada, amounted to more than seven thousand men.

Nor was the naval and auxiliary armament constructed at Erie, more tardy in its movements. On the 2d of August, the vessels were brought over the bar; and on the 5th, were in condition to offer battle to the enemy's fleet. This challenge being declined, a second experiment, made with the same view on the 7th, had a similar result. It was, however, soon found, that Barclay's hesitancy had not arisen from any settled purpose of avoiding a combat, but merely to supply a defect in the necessary preparation of his

now actually flying from his supposed pursuer; while the other, waited only the arrival of Croghan at Seneca, to begin a camp-conflagration, and flight to fort Meigs. See Appendix, No. 24.

ships. At sunrise of the 10th of September, he was seen bearing down from Malden in the direction of Put-in Bay, whither Perry hastened to follow and to fight him.

The relative force of the two fleets, was not widely different—that of the British, was composed of two ships, two schooners, one brig, and one sloop, carrying sixty-three guns (twelve, eighteen and twenty-four-pounders) with five hundred and eleven seamen and marines; while that of the United States, consisted of three brigs, two schooners, and four sloops, mounting fifty-four carronades, and manned by four hundred seamen and marines.[1] In command of the former, was a distinguished veteran of the Nelson school, to whom all the secrets, real and pretended, of naval tactics, must have been intimately known; while, at the head of the latter, was a youth "whose home had long been on the deep"—glowing with patriotism and courage, but having no experimental knowledge of battles fought in squadron.

As if in some degree, to compensate this and other points of disparity, the wind, which early in the morning blew from the south-west, shifted to the south-east, and gave to the American fleet the weather-gage. Availing himself of this advantage, perhaps with too little attention to the sailing qualities of his smaller vessels, Perry, at a quarter before twelve, placed the Lawrence in a position to begin

1 McAffee's History.

an action, which, for pertinacity and effect, will rank high in the annals of naval warfare. Finding, after an experiment of ten minutes, that the distance he had taken was better adapted to his enemy's guns than to his own, he made sail ahead; soon after which, to his great mortification, "the brig became unmanageable—every brace and bowline being, in the meantime, shot away." Yet in this crippled condition, she gallantly "sustained the contest for more than two hours," at canister distance; when "every gun she had, being rendered useless, and a large portion of her crew killed or wounded,"[1] her commander transferred himself and his flag on board the Niagara, which, at this critical moment, a gust of wind had brought to his aid. A movement was now wanting that should give to the conflict a decided character and favorable issue; and this, Perry hastened to employ. At forty-five minutes past two, the smaller vessels having got into line, the signal for close action was made; when the Niagara, bearing up and passing the Detroit, Queen Charlotte and Lady Provost, at half pistol-shot distance, poured into them a most destructive fire from her starboard guns; and from her larboard battery another of equal execution, on the Chippewa and Little Belt. What yet remained to be done, was soon accomplished by the gun-boats, under the skilful direction of Captain Elliot;[2] the

1 Perry's official letter, dated September 13th, 1813.
2 Idem.

flags of the Detroit, Queen Charlotte, and Lady Provost, were struck in quick succession; those of the brig Hunter and schooner Chippewa, were not slow in following the example; and the Little Belt, which now attempted to escape, was promptly pursued and soon captured. Such was the termination of this well-fought and decisive battle—brilliant in itself, having the most important bearing on the issue of the campaign, and requiring nothing to complete its glory, but the humble and pious gratitude with which it was announced.

The road to Malden being no longer obstructed by the enemy, the commanding General now hastened to avail himself of the first impression made on Proctor by this naval victory. Embarking the army on the 27th, he on that day sailed under convoy of the fleet for the Canada shore; which, from the favorable state of the wind and weather, he was enabled to reach at three o'clock, P. M. No enemy appearing to interrupt the debarcation, it was safely and promptly made, and the march continued to Amherstburg, where the troops bivouacked for the night.

It was here, that General Harrison first learned, that Proctor, after dismantling Malden, burning the barracks and navy-yard, and stripping the adjacent country of horses and cattle, had early on the 26th, began his retreat into the interior of the province. Though no time was lost in resuming the pursuit in the morning, still, reasoning from the urgency of Proctor's motives for a speedy flight, and the ample

means he possessed for executing it successfully, the movement was made without the smallest hope that the American army could, by any effort, be able to overtake him.[1] This desponding view of the business, which, had it continued longer, would no doubt have verified itself, was fortunately much diminished, if not entirely removed, (soon after the arrival of the army at Sandwich,) by finding, that the want of horses, which, in the General's opinion, rendered the pursuit hopeless, would be well and abundantly supplied by Johnson's mounted regiment, which was now seen winding its way along the opposite bank of the Detroit.[2]

Two days were now employed in re-establishing the civil government of the Michigan Territory, and assigning to it a defensive corps; in organizing a portion of the army for rapid movement, and in giving to the whole of it an order of march and battle. It was not, therefore, until the 2d of October, that the pursuit was resumed, nor until the 5th, that the enemy was overtaken. On this day, he was discovered in a position skilfully chosen, in relation as well to local circumstances, as to the character of his troops. A narrow strip of dry

1 General Harrison's letter to the Secretary of War, dated September 27th, 1813. In this letter, the General says—"I will pursue the enemy to-morrow, although there is no probability of overtaking him; as he has upwards of one thousand horses, and we have not one in the army."

2 This corps had been organized by direction of the War Department, for frontier defence, in the spring of 1813, under the command of Colonel R. M. Johnson.

ground, flanked by the Thames on the left, and by a swamp on the right, was occupied by his regular infantry, amounting to eight hundred bayonets, sustained by artillery: while on the right flank, lay Tecumseh and his followers, on the eastern margin of the swamp. After satisfying himself of these facts, General Harrison hastened to make such disposition of his force, as, in his opinion, was best accommodated to the case. To Trotter's brigade of Kentucky volunteers, was assigned the front line, extending from the swamp to the road near the bank of the river. One hundred and fifty yards in the rear of Trotter, King's brigade formed a second line, of similar extent; and in the rear of King, Child's brigade was held in reserve. On the left of Trotter and covering his flank, Desha's division, composed of two brigades, was posted in crotchet or *en potence*—while to the mounted gun-men, was assigned the duty of turning the right flank of the Indian position.

This arrangement was scarcely announced, when two important circumstances, which had either not been attended to at all, or very negligently, were now fully ascertained; the one, that the service assigned to the mounted regiment, was impracticable, from the miry character of the soil, and the number and closeness of the thickets which covered it; the other, that Proctor had neglected to strengthen the front of his position with either ditch or abbatis; and had besides, committed the greater fault, of giving to his regular infantry a formation

of open order. Acting on this state of things, which left no doubt of the true point of attack, or of the means most proper to be employed in making it, the mounted corps was now ordered to form in close column in front of the volunteers; to advance obliquely in the direction of the British infantry, and after receiving their fire, to charge them at full speed. On examining the ground directed by the preceding order to be taken, the space was found to be too narrow for a useful employment of the whole regiment; when Colonel Johnson, in the exercise of a discretion wisely left to him, separated the two battalions of which it was composed; giving to the one, the execution of the projected charge on the British infantry, and to the other, a simultaneous attack on the Indian line. Of the two corps, the second battalion, "in four columns of double files," had advanced but a short distance, when it received the enemy's fire; which, as might have been expected from men and horses unpractised in war, and brought for the first time into actual combat, produced a recoil in the heads of the columns. The disorder was, however, soon and completely retrieved, and a second fire sustained, with the *sang froid* of veterans; when the charge, as directed, was promptly and vigorously made, and with a success, seldom equalled and never surpassed. In "the single minute of time" which it occupied,[1] the victory of the day was essentially won, and nearly the

[1] Harrison's Official Report of the action.

whole of the regular force of the enemy killed, wounded, or taken. The contest between the first battalion and the savages, was, like the preceding, sharp but short; its duration not exceeding six or seven minutes. In this, the gallant Colonel Johnson was thrice severely wounded; and his not less gallant adversary, Tecumseh, the head and heart of the Indian line, killed on the spot he defended. Proctor, who had saved himself and part of his suite, by a base desertion of his troops, was now strenuously but unsuccessfully pursued. The chase was not, however, altogether barren; fifty additional prisoners and six pieces of brass artillery were captured and secured.

Thus fortunately terminated an expedition, the results of which were of high importance to the United States; a naval ascendency gained on Lakes Erie and Superior; Malden destroyed, Detroit recovered, Proctor defeated, the alliance between Great Britain and the savages dissolved, and peace and industry restored to our widely extended and much exposed western frontier. With the proud satisfaction of having contributed to these important events, the Kentucky volunteers began their homeward march, under the direction of their gallant and venerable leader, the late Governor Shelby.

The attention of General Harrison and Commodore Perry, on getting back to Sandwich, was for a moment, attracted to measures necessary to the reduction of Michilimackinac; but the weather becoming stormy, and the navigation of Lake Superior

dangerous, the project was abandoned, and another and better substituted in its stead. Leaving to General Cass and his brigade the defence of Detroit, the residue of the regular troops, amounting to thirteen hundred men, were promptly embarked and brought down to Buffalo, where they arrived on the 24th of October. In taking this step, the General had anticipated the wishes of the Secretary of War, who, in a despatch of the 22d of October, suggested as an ulterior operation for the army of the west, a movement to the Niagara, and an attack of the right and rear of De Rottenburg's position; while McClure's militia and Porter's volunteers should assail it in front—a measure, the execution of which was only prevented by the slowness with which both corps assembled for the purpose; by the reported movement of the enemy from the peninsula to Kingston; and by the risk arising from any great accumulation of force at that post, to our naval depôt at Sacket's Harbor, in the absence of the army, which was now moving in another direction.[1]

The better to obviate this cause of alarm, the Secretary of War directed, that McArthur's brigade should be removed, as promptly as might be convenient, to the harbor; intending by the limitation thus given to the order, that Smith's battalion of riflemen should be left to make part of the garrison

1 See Appendix, No. 24.

of fort George, and the defence of the Niagara frontier; instead of which, both corps were brought down the lake by the General, who, hastening his return to the west, soon after closed his military career by a resignation of his commission.

Remarks. This third and last campaign of General Harrison, though in its issue highly important to the nation and honorable to its arms, would, in all probability, have had a termination as disastrous as its immediate predecessor, had the General been indulged, as formerly, with a *carte blanche* in the mode of conducting it.

It will be remembered, that in prosecuting the war in the west, the cabinet of 1813, limited the exercise of its authority to a mere designation of objects; leaving to the knowledge and judgment of the commanding General, the selection of means, time and manner of pursuing them. The frequent and unexpected misfortunes, which in this and part of the succeeding year, befel the American arms in district No. 8, could not fail to suggest a change of this system, in two essential points—the *exclusively military character of the armament:* and the *latitude, given to the General with respect to the number and kind of troops to be employed, and the time and mode of employing them.* A plan of campaign conformed to these general views, was accordingly prescribed, limiting the army to *seven thousand combatants;* designating *Malden* as the object of attack; adding

to the military, *a naval force;*[1] and directing a movement of the former by *water*, instead of a *land-march of "nearly two hundred miles" through a swampy desert;* in which, besides the ordinary impediments arising from roads and weather, it would, at every step, have been liable to the attacks, open and covered, of *four thousand savages.*[2]

[1] No efficient measures were taken by the government to obtain a command of the lakes, until October, 1812. A letter, written about this time, by General Armstrong to Mr. Gallatin, was probably the means of recalling the attention of the cabinet to this important subject. In this letter, the General stated the following facts—"that he was informed by Captain Chauncey, that as early as the 1st of July, Captain Woolsey had requested twenty six-pounders, of which, there were more than one hundred in the navy-yard unemployed; that the intention of Woolsey was to arm such vessels of commerce, as could be found on the lake, and at Sacket's Harbor, with the aid of which he would be able to get a complete command of the water, and that he (Captain Chauncey) not believing himself authorized to do more, had but referred the letter to the Secretary of the Navy, from whom no answer had been received." On these facts, the General subjoined the following opinions, that "it was not yet too late to accomplish Mr. Woolsey's object; and that the object in itself was of the highest importance; that besides giving us the advantage of *an exclusive and uninterrupted use of the Lakes for public purposes, it would effectually separate Upper from Lower Canada, cut asunder the enemy's line of communication, and prevent Brock and Provost from succoring each other.*" Soon after the receipt of this letter, Commodore Chauncey received authority to build and equip, armed vessels on Lake Ontario; and General Dearborn a similar authority, to arm and otherwise fit out for public service, such commercial craft as might be useful on Lake Champlain. For another communication, involving this and other subjects, see Appendix, No. 22.

[2] McAffee and Christie. The latter, residing in Canada, and having access to public functionaries, must be considered good authority with respect to the numbers with which the expedition began.

To a stratagic movement of this kind, expressly calculated to gain an ascendency on the Lake, and thus to neutralize the Indian part of the enemy's force, and secure to the American army a direct approach to its object, without expense, fatigue, or peril—no opposition, on the part of the General, was anticipated; and the more so, as in December or January preceding, he had officially announced, that "if the government would employ *naval means*, all their objects could be accomplished, in the short space of *two months in the spring*."[1] Yet, so vacillating was his judgment on this subject, that in March, 1813, he substantially revoked this advice, and did what he could, to obtain permission to conduct the campaign by the *old route, and in the old way*.[2] Fortunately, time, and the experience it brought with it, had lessened the weight of the General's opinions at Washington; his suggestions on the present occasion, were, therefore, promptly and decidedly discarded, and a new order issued, for prosecuting the campaign on the plan given in March, which, as we have seen, terminated successfully in August.

Mr. Harrison's next error was of a character even more menacing than the preceding; and but for the counteraction given to it by Major Croghan, must have been followed by disaster and disgrace—a con-

1 General Harrison's letter to the War Department, of the 12th December, 1812.

2 Harrison's official letter, of the 17th of March, and answer of the Secretary of War, Appendix, No. 23.

clusion, abundantly established by the following facts. On the 21st of April, after inspecting the defences at *Lower Sandusky*, the General, in a letter to the War Department, denounced that post as worthless in itself, and "impossible to save," and, therefore, "to be immediately *stripped of its stores, and promptly abandoned on the approach of the enemy.*"[1] Yet, on the 26th or 27th of July, though apprised of Proctor's coming, at the head of a force, estimated at five thousand combatants; though having done nothing to render the place more defensible, and somewhat to make it less so; though neither promising, nor intending to sustain it, should it be attacked; and though actually withdrawing himself and the army to Seneca, nine miles distant from it —yet, in despite of all these circumstances of inhibition, he placed in fort Stephenson a detachment of one hundred and sixty United States infantry, with "a single and small piece of artillery, and seven rounds of cannon cartridges," under orders to *retreat*, if "the enemy landed in force and with cannon, provided *retreat should then be practicable.*"

We need hardly remark, that an order of this kind, which put to hazard a detachment of this magnitude, in an untenable post, with few of the means necessary for meeting either siege or assault, and which forbade a retreat, while this could have been made with certainty and safety; and for a purpose altogether unnecessary, as he had already

[1] Harrison's letter of the 21st of April, 1813.

concluded—that "*coming by water, Proctor had not neglected to bring with him artillery*"[1]—was, in its whole bearing, a direct violation of every military rule applicable to the case. Nor was the General's subsequent conduct better conformed to their injunctions.

Having on the 29th, sufficiently assured himself with regard to the number and equipment of Proctor's force, and suspecting that this formidable array might be directed against his own intrenched camp at Seneca; he at once determined, "to collect and destroy his surplus stores, abandon his present position and make good a retreat to Upper Sandusky" —leaving to the fate that might await them, the settlements on the southern shore of the Lake; the boats built and stores collected at Cleveland; and Perry's fleet, then fitting out and nearly ready for service, at Presque Isle.[2] But though willing and prepared to make these sacrifices, he could not but perceive that a mere presumption of danger to his own camp, would not justify the abandonment of Croghan's detachment, without some effort on his part, to extend to it the eventual security he sought for himself. On this point, however, the General's

1 "As the enemy, coming by water, could bring with facility any quantity of battering cannon against it, it must inevitably fall"—a fact assumed by the General, in the council of war, held on the evening of the 29th.—*McAffee's History*, p. 322.

2 That *this* was the great object of the expedition will be seen by Provost's letter to Proctor, of the 11th of July, and De Rottenburg's to Barclay, of the same month, Appendix, No. 19.

sense of duty was soon satisfied; forgetting alike the admonition contained in his first order to Croghan, "*not to hazard a retreat in the face of an Indian investment*," and the fact, now perfectly known to himself, that such investment did exist;[1] he despatched to that officer a second order, for "*an immediate retreat*," *at all hazards;* indicating the route by which he was to make it, but taking no step to *cover*, or otherwise *sustain the movement.* And, as if the task thus imposed, was not in itself sufficiently perilous, he farther prescribed—that the garrison, instead of employing all possible means to *mask* the operation, should *begin* "*by setting fire to their stores and barracks*," and thus virtually announce their intention to the surrounding enemy.[2]

Fortunately, the great disposer of the events of this world, not unfrequently converts evil into good, and folly into wisdom. On the present occasion, we have seen, that by the first order given to Croghan, he was assigned to the defence of a post, which, in the General's opinion, "*could not be saved*," and at the same time, forbidden to retreat, *in the face of an Indian investment;* and that by a second, he was ordered *to abandon this untenable post, and make good a retreat of nine miles, through a continuous forest filled with savages, without aid or support of any kind.* Left,

1 In Harrison's official letter of the 4th of August, he says—"Having heard the firing [at the fort] I made many attempts to ascertain the force of the enemy; but our *scouts were unable to get near the fort, from the Indians who surrounded it.*"

2 Second order given to Croghan, Appendix, No. 21.

therefore, to choose between taking the risk of a British assault, or an Indian massacre, this officer did not hesitate, and was thus compelled to disobey an order, which directly defeated its own object. Yet, under circumstances so unpromising, whether separately or collectively considered, results of the most benign character followed—the *defeat of the enemy's objects, present and prospective*, and the preservation of our own army, from *the disgrace of a wasteful and unnecessary flight.*[1]

A word or two, at parting, on the charge made by a battalion of Johnson's mounted regiment, (unequipped with either swords or lances,) on a corps of veteran infantry, well armed with muskets and bayonets, sustained by cannon, and numerically stronger than their assailants. That the charge was gallantly made, and eminently successful, (*winning the battle*, as acknowledged by the General himself, "*in a single minute*,") cannot be doubted; but to bestow on it, the additional praise of deserving its good fortune, must depend on two facts, not yet sufficiently ascertained: 1st, whether the measure was, or was not, suggested by a discovery of Proctor's faulty order of battle? And, 2d, whether it was, or was not, adopted under a sense of the advantage furnished to the assailant, by this error of

1 Extract from Governor Duncan's report of the defence of Sandusky, by Major Croghan, made to Mr. Mercer, chairman of the Military Committee of the House of Representatives, in 1834, Appendix, No. 20.

his enemy ?[1] If these questions can be answered affirmatively, the merit of the charge will be greatly enhanced and fully established. The affair will no longer be subject to be classed with victories *merely fortuitous ;* but take its place with those *inspirations*[2] (as they have been called) of Turenne and Bonaparte, which, *founded on the error of an enemy, and seen at a glance of the eye*, could justify the most palpable deviation from ordinary rules.

1 Proctor's situation at Malden (after Barclay's defeat) made necessary on his part, a prompt retreat to Vincent, unincumbered with baggage; or, a vigorous defence of the post committed to his custody. By adopting the former, he would have saved seven hundred veteran soldiers and a train of artillery, for the future service of his sovereign; by adopting the latter, he would have retained the whole of his Indian allies (three thousand combatants); given time for the militia of the interior to come to his aid; had the full advantage of his fortress and its munitions—and a chance, at least, of eventual success, with a certainty of keeping inviolate his own self-respect, and the confidence of his followers. Taking a middle course between these extremes, he lost the advantages that would have resulted from either. His retreat began too late—was much incumbered with women, children and baggage, and at no time urged with sufficient vigor, or protected with sufficient care. Bridges and roads, ferries and boats, were left behind him, neither destroyed, nor obstructed; and when, at last, he was overtaken and obliged to fight, he gave to his veterans a formation, which enabled a corps of four hundred mounted infantry, armed with rifles, hatchets and butcher knives, to win the battle "in a single minute." Conduct like this, deserved all the opprobrium and punishment it received, and justly led to General Harrison's conclusion—"that his antagonist had lost his senses."

2 The affair, more particularly alluded to in this passage, is the attack and capture made of the Spanish batteries, planted on the crest and covering the ascent of the Sommo-Sierra, by the lancers of the Imperial guard, in 1808. See Napier's Peninsular War, Vol. I, p. 402.

Another and last question on this subject—*On whose suggestion, was the charge under consideration, made?* Did the General, as he insinuates, "find the daisy all himself?" or, was the conception of the project, the legitimate property of Colonel R. M. Johnson? Non nos, tantas componere lites.[1]

[1] Appendix, No. 21.

APPENDIX.

APPENDIX.

[No. 1.]

The ministry of the elder Adams in England, began on the 10th of June, 1785. In a letter to the American Secretary of Foreign Affairs, on the 19th of July following, he says—"The popular pulse seems to beat high against America; the people are deceived by numberless falsehoods circulated by the gazettes, &c., so that there is too much reason to believe, that if the nation had another hundred million to spend, they would soon force the ministry into a war against us. Their present system, as far as I can penetrate it, is to maintain a determined peace with all Europe, in order that they may war singly against America, if they should think it necessary." In a second letter of the 30th of August following, he says—"In short, sir, America has no party at present in her favor—all parties, on the contrary, have committed themselves against us—even Shelburne and Buckingham. I had almost said, the friends of America are reduced to Dr. Price and Dr. Jebb." Again, on the 15th of October, 1785, he informs the American Secretary—"that though it is manifestly as much the interest of Great Britain to be well with us, as for us to be well with them, yet this is not the judgment of the English nation; it is

not the judgment of Lord North and his party; it is not the judgment of the Duke of Portland and his friends, and it does not appear to be the judgment of Mr. Pitt and the present set. In short, it does not at present appear to be the sentiment of any body; and I am much inclined to believe, they will try the issue of importance with us." In his two last letters, the one dated in November, the other in December, 1787, we find the following passages—"If she [England] can bind Holland in her shackles, and France from internal dissension is unable to interfere, she will make war immediately against us. No answer is made to any of my memorials, or letters to the ministry, nor do I expect that any will be done while I stay."

[No. 2.]

Letters from Colonel McKee (British Superintendent of Indian affairs) to Colonel England, dated 5th of July, and 13th and 30th of August, 1794, found among Proctor's papers, captured in 1813.—"I send this by a party of Saganas, who returned yesterday from fort Recovery, where the whole body of Indians, except the Delawares, who had gone another route, imprudently attacked the fort on Monday, the 30th of last month, and lost sixteen or seventeen men, besides a good many wounded.

"Every thing had been settled prior to their leaving the Fallen Timber, and it had been agreed upon, to confine themselves to taking convoys and attacking at a dis-

tance from the forts, if they should have the address to entice the enemy out; but the impetuosity of the Mackinaw Indians, and their eagerness to begin with the nearest, prevailed with the others to alter their system; the consequences of which, from the present appearance of things, may most materially injure the interests of these people; both the Mackinaw and Lake Indians seeming resolved on going home again, having completed the belts they carried with scalps and prisoners, and having no provision there, or at the Glaze, to subsist upon; so that his majesty's post will derive no security from the late great influx of Indians into this part of the country, should they persist in their resolution of returning so soon.

"Captain Elliot writes, that they [the British agents] are immediately to hold a council at the Glaze, in order to try if they can prevail on the Lake Indians to remain; but without provisions, ammunition, &c., being sent to that place, I conceive it will be extremely difficult to keep them together.

"I was honored last night with your letter of the 11th, and am extremely glad to find you are making such exertions to supply the Indians with provisions. Captain Elliot arrived yesterday; what he has brought will greatly relieve us, having been obliged yesterday to take all the corn and flour which the traders had here. Scouts are sent up to view the situation of the [American] army, and we now muster one thousand Indians. All the Lake Indians, from Sagana downwards, should not lose one moment in joining their brethren, as every accession of strength is an addition to their spirits.

"I have been employed several days in endeavoring to fix the Indians (who have been driven from their villages

and cornfields) between the fort and the bay. Swan Creek is generally agreed upon, and will be a very convenient place for the delivery of provisions, &c. The last accounts from General Wayne's army were brought me last night by an Indian, who says, the army would not be able to reach the Glaze, before yesterday evening; it is supposed on account of the sick and wounded, many of whom they bury every day."

[No. 3.]

Letter from President Washington to Mr. Jay, dated 30th August, 1794.—"As you will receive letters from the Secretary of State's Office, giving an official account of the public occurrences as they have arisen and advanced, it is unnecessary for me to retouch any of them; and yet, I cannot restrain myself from making some observations on the most recent of them, the communication of which, was received this morning only. I mean the protest of the Governor of Upper Canada, delivered by Lieutenant Sheafe, against our occupying lands far from any of the posts, which, long ago, they ought to have surrendered, and far within the known, and until now, the acknowledged limits of the United States.

"On this irregular and high-handed proceeding of Mr. Simcoe, which is no longer masked, I would rather hear what the ministry of Great Britain will say, than pronounce my own sentiments thereon. But can that government, or will it attempt, after this official act of one of their

governors, to hold out ideas of friendly intentions towards the United States, and suffer such conduct to pass with impunity?

"This may be considered as the most open and daring act of the British agents in America, though it is not the most hostile and cruel; for there does not remain a doubt in the mind of any well-informed person in this country, not shut against conviction, that *all the difficulties we encounter with the Indians, their hostilities, the murders of helpless women and children along our frontiers, result from the conduct of the agents of Great Britain in this country.* In vain is it then for its administration in Britain, to disavow having given orders which will warrant such conduct, whilst their agents go unpunished; whilst we have a thousand corroborating circumstances, and indeed as many evidences, some of which cannot be brought forward, to prove, that they are seducing from our alliances, and endeavoring to remove over the line, tribes that have hitherto been kept in peace and friendship with us at a heavy expense, and who have no causes of complaint, except pretended ones of their creating; whilst they keep in a state of irritation the tribes who are hostile to us, and are instigating those who know little of us, or we of them, to unite in the war against us; and whilst it is *an undeniable fact, that they are furnishing the whole with arms, ammunition, clothing, and even provisions to carry on the war.* I might go farther, and, if they are not much belied, add, *men also in disguise.*

"Can it be expected, I ask, so long as these things are known in the United States, or at least, firmly believed, and suffered with impunity by Great Britain, that there ever will or can be any cordiality between the two coun-

tries? I answer—No. And I will undertake, without the gift of prophecy to predict, that it will be impossible to keep this country in a state of amity with Great Britain long, if these posts are not surrendered. A knowledge of these being my sentiments would have little weight, I am persuaded, with the British administration, or perhaps with the nation, in effecting the measure, but both may rest satisfied, that if they want to be at peace with this country, and to enjoy the benefits of its trade, to give up the posts is the only road to it. Withholding them, and the consequences we feel at present continuing, war will be inevitable."

[No. 4.]

Letter of credence given by the Governor-General of the Canadas to John Henry. "The bearer, Mr. John Henry, is employed by me, and full confidence may be placed in him for communications which any person may wish to make to me in the business committed to him. In faith of which, I have given him this, under my hand and seal, at Quebec, the 6th of February, 1809.

(Signed.) J. H. CRAIG."

Extract from the letter of instructions to Mr. Henry.

[Most secret and confidential.]

"*Quebec*, 6*th February*, 1809.

"It has been supposed, that if the federalists of the eastern states should be successful in obtaining that decided influence, which may enable them to direct the public

opinion, it is not improbable, that rather than submit to a continuance of the difficulties and distress to which they are now subject, they will exert that influence to bring about *a separation from the general Union.* The earliest information on this subject, may be of great consequence to our government, as it may also be, that it should be informed, *how far, in such an event, they would look to England for assistance, or be disposed to enter into a connexion with us?*"

Report made to Sir James Craig, under the preceding instruction, and dated Boston, March 7th, 1809. "Sir, I have now ascertained, with as much accuracy as possible, the course intended to be pursued by the measures and politics of the general government. I have already given a decided opinion, that a declaration of war is not to be expected; but, contrary to all reasonable calculation, should the Congress possess spirit and independence enough to place their popularity in jeopardy by so strong a measure, *the legislature of Massachusetts will give the tone to the neighboring states; will declare itself permanent, until a new election of members; invite a Congress, to be composed of delegates from the federal states, and erect a separate government for their common defence and common interest.*"

Time, that great betrayer of political secrets, has produced a curious illustration of the opinion given by Henry in the preceding report. Mr. Adams, *ci-devant* President of the United States, in a late publication admits, that in 1808, "he earnestly recommended to the friends of the administration of that day, the substitution of the *non-intercourse* for the *embargo;* and in giving his reasons for that preference, was necessarily led to enlarge upon the views and purposes of *certain leaders of the party, which*

had the management of the state legislature in their hands. He urged, that *a continuance of the embargo much longer, would certainly be met by forcible resistance, supported by the legislature, and probably, by the judiciary of the state;* that to quell that resistance, (if force should be resorted to by the government,) would produce a civil war; and that in that event, he had no doubt *the leaders of the party would secure the co-operation with them of Great Britain. That their object was, and had been for several years, a dissolution of the Union, and the establishment of a separate confederation, he knew from unequivocal evidence, although not proveable in a court of law; and that in the case of a civil war, the aid of Great Britain to effect that purpose, would be as surely resorted to, as it would be indispensably necessary to the design.*" It would be unjust to the party, thus accused by Mr. Adams, were we not to add, that the expositions subsequently made on this subject, do not sustain the opinions given by that gentleman.

[No. 5.]

As a specimen of the temper of the opposition of that day, we subjoin the following resolution of the Senate of Massachusetts, passed on the 15th of June, 1813, in consequence of the capture of his His Britannic Majesty's ship Peacock, by the American ship Hornet.

"*Resolved*, As the sense of the Senate of Massachusetts, that in a war like the present, waged without justifiable cause, and prosecuted in a manner which indicates that

conquest and ambition are its real motives; it is not becoming a moral and religious people, to express any approbation of military or naval exploits, which are not immediately connected with the defence of our seacoast and soil."

A further exposition of this temper will be found in an act of the legislature of Connecticut, declaring the law of the United States (authorizing the enlistment of minors) *unconstitutional*, and providing, that all persons acting under it within the state, should be punished by *fine* and *imprisonment*. The penal clause was, however, qualified at the instance of the Speaker of the House, and the punishment by imprisonment given up. About the same time, all troops of the United States were, by an act of the Corporation of Hartford, *excluded from the city.—Major (now General) Jessup's Report to the Department of State.*

[No. 6.]

Our authority for making this statement will be found in the following extract from a letter of the 28th of September, 1834, written by Major-General Jessup, of the army of the United States.

"As to the particular fact in relation to which you desire information, (the franking of the letters from which the enemy derived his knowledge of the declaration of war,) it rests on general report and *Mr. Gallatin's admission*, (made to General Findley, in 1812,) that *he had franked*

letters addressed to persons in the enemy's territory." Of letters, so *franked* and *addressed*, three have been noticed; *one* sent to the west, (probably to St. Joseph,) furnished the first authentic evidence of the declaration of war received there; and with it a good and sufficient reason, for attacking and capturing Michilimackinac and its garrison. Such was the substance of a report made by Lieutenant Hanks to General Hull, and the officer then serving as his Adjutant-General. A *second*, sent to Malden, (according to information given to General Jessup and the late Major Dugan, while at that place,) was received by the British commanding officer, on the 28th of June; and, no doubt, caused the attack and capture of the Cayahoga packet, carrying the sick and convalescent of Hull's army, with his and their baggage. A *third*, reached Detroit, "was there retained and seen by many persons, among whom, was General James Findley, of Kentucky." Whatever may have been the motive of the letter writer, the injury done to the United States cannot be denied—as its direct, if not obvious effect, was to take from them and give to the enemy, the power of striking the first blow—an advantage, which often decides the fate of a campaign, and not unfrequently, that of a war.

[No. 7.]

Memorandum of statements made by General Winchester and Major Madison to the Secretary of War, on their return from captivity.

"To avoid embarrassing the service with a personal controversy, and at the request of General Harrison, though the elder Brigadier, I continued in the command of the advanced corps, then on the Au Glaize, under a promise on his part, that 'I should be soon re-enforced and sufficiently supplied.' Early in December, I received orders to advance to the Rapids; a point, selected by the General, for establishing a magazine for the supply of the expedition. From the freezing up of the rivers, which prevented the use of boats, and from not being provided with teams or pack-horses for transporting the baggage and provisions, and being consequently obliged to drag both by hand, over roads then deeply covered with snow, it was the 10th of January before we arrived at that post. When two days on the march, I received a letter from General Harrison, advising me to send back within contract limits, two of the regiments composing the brigade, which was now reduced by sickness and fatigue to less than nine hundred effectives. This advice I declined following, for the subjoined reasons—The post assigned to us had become highly important, from its being the site of our magazine, and from the fact, that it was considerably nearer to the enemy's main body than to our own; that the roads between Malden and the Rapids, were more easily travelled than those between the Rapids and General Harrison's head-quarters; that having no intermediate post to observe or interrupt a movement against us, if made by the enemy, they might come on secretly and invest and carry the position, without giving us the power of even making known our condition to the other parts of the army; and lastly, that being thus exposed to attack and out of sustaining distance, the post

had not the ordinary means of defence; having neither cannon nor fortification, nor intrenching or other tools, necessary for making the latter; nor even an order for so using them, if they had been provided—the only instruction given me being that 'of clearing my front of an Indian party, supposed to have established itself on Swan Creek, and making huts for covering the provisions and baggage.' Had I taken the General's advice, my effective force on my arrival at the Rapids, would not have exceeded four hundred effectives, left to defend themselves and the magazines, with muskets and rifles only, against the attacks of a British and Indian force, which General Harrison did not estimate at less than *four thousand combatants.* Having promptly fulfilled the order above mentioned, of driving off the Indian party, we proceeded to make a large and strong house; which besides covering our supplies, would be useful as a place of defence against the attacks of the enemy. Of our arrival and situation the General was informed, by the best means I had—a party returning to McArthur's block-house; by whom I also requested a fulfilment of his promise of a speedy re-enforcement. In this state of things, three expresses, bringing letters from Mr. Day of Frenchtown, arrived in my camp in quick succession, with information, that a British and Indian force had arrived there (about three hundred in number) with orders to seize and send to Malden, all inhabitants attached to the United States government, or suspected of being so attached, and with them, all horses and cattle, sleds, carioles, and provisions of every kind, and condemning at once the whole settlement to starvation, imprisonment or slaughter, in case of refusal or resistance. The information was forthwith communicated to a council

of war, who, after full discussion, unanimously agreed, that a detachment should be immediately marched against the British and Indian marauders. A detachment of six hundred men was accordingly sent under Colonel Lewis, of whose success on the 18th, General Harrison was immediately apprised, and a request made on General Perkins (whose post was nearest to me) for another battalion or regiment, and some artillery if practicable. Suspecting that Proctor would make an attempt to revenge this stroke, and knowing that our wounded men could not be removed, I hastened to re-enforce Colonel Lewis with Wells's regiment, (two hundred and fifty men,) and set out myself to join him, and arrived on the morning of the 20th. The town, lying on the north side of the river, was picketed on three sides—the longest, facing the north and making the front. Within these pickets, Colonel Lewis's corps was found. Not thinking the position elegible, nor the pickets a sufficient defence against artillery, I would have retreated, but for the wounded, of whom there were fifty-five; but having no sufficient means for transporting these, and equally destitute of those necessary for fortifying strongly, I issued an order for putting the place in the best condition for defence that might be practicable; intending to construct some new works, as soon as the means for getting out timber might be had. On the evening of the 20th, Wells arrived, and was directed to encamp on the right, in an open field, immediately without the picketing. On the 21st, a patrole as far as Brownstown was sent out, and returned without seeing any thing of an enemy; on the same day, a man from Malden came in, who reported, that the enemy were preparing to attack us, but knowing nothing of the kind or extent of the preparation made or

making, what he brought was thought to be only conjecture, and such as led to a belief, that it would be some days before Proctor would be ready to do any thing. The troops were now in high spirits, expecting the arrival of General Harrison with re-enforcements from the Rapids, where he had got on the 20th; despatching his Inspector-General on the same day with orders to me, 'to hold the ground we had got at any rate,' implying as we believed, an engagement on his part, to be soon with us and in force. Neither night-patrole, nor night-pickets were ordered by me, from a belief, that both were matters of routine and in constant use. Our force now amounted to seven hundred and fifty men, stationed as before mentioned; the volunteers within, and Wells's regiment without the pickets. Not to discommode the wounded men, who, with Colonel Lewis's corps, occupied the houses on the north side of the river, I at some increased personal risk, took quarters for myself and suite, in a house on the southern bank, directly fronting the troops and only separated from them by the river, then firmly frozen, and but between eighty and one hundred yards wide. While the reveille was beating on the morning of the 22d, the alarm was given, and was soon followed by an attack of the British on the front, and by that of the Indians on both flanks. I was with the troops in a few minutes, and found every man at his post. Finding the left of the line on the outside of the pickets somewhat galled by the enemy's fire, (in pursuance of a plan previously laid in case of attack,) I requested Colonel Allen to draw them forward, and bring them within the picketing. When this order had been nearly executed, and the head of the line was within a few steps of the entrance, where I stood,

some of the soldiers mistaking the movement for a retreat, sounded the alarm and began to fly, when the whole broke and rushed towards the river. I instantly ordered them to be reformed under the bank; but though great efforts were made by Colonels Lewis and Allen, and others, to effect this object, they failed; the panic of the men overcoming all authority. Parts of two companies from the picketing, brought out to aid in restoring order, were carried off by the current; and a daring Indian attack from both flanks being now commenced on the fugitives, all further resistance was overwhelmed. Colonel Allen fell, and Colonel Lewis and myself were captured. My farther agency was only that of an adviser. No longer hoping any thing from the intervention of General Harrison, and seeing one half of our force already captured or dispersed, I anticipated only the slaughter of those within the pickets who yet bravely held out; and assured by Proctor, that on a surrender, he would give honorable terms, I advised to that measure. Not being permitted to communicate with Majors Graves or Madison in person, my opinion was probably misunderstood, and certainly misrepresented, as after my own capture, I had no idea that I could legally exercise authority over them. I will not, however, pretend that I am able now to recollect the terms I used on the occasion, but the present is a true statement of what I intended."

Major Madison's statement.

"Our force, on the 22d of January, was between seven hundred and fifty and eight hundred men. The original detachment under Colonel Lewis was diminished by the action of the 18th with Reynolds, upwards of seventy-five

men—fifty-five of whom were wounded—and increased two hundred and fifty, by Wells's regiment, brought on by General Winchester. Proctor's force did not much, if at all, exceed one thousand men, three hundred regulars, the remainder Canadian militia and Indians. On the first (the regulars) Proctor's principal dependance was placed, but from the coldness of the weather and the depth of the snow, his artillery became unmanageable; and his infantry after doing its best, and losing one-fourth of its number, was not in either condition or disposition to renew its attack on the picketed part of our position.

"Our camp-police was, perhaps, not what it ought to have been; but I am not here the accuser or excuser of any one, though thoroughly convinced that the principal error of the campaign, and that which brought all other evils upon us, was the great distance at which the other parts of the army were kept. Had the disposition been different, had the main body been located within sustaining distance of the advanced corps, or had this corps been re-enforced by even a single battalion of five hundred men, ours would have been a victory instead of a defeat. As it was, so firmly did the few men holding the town believe in their power of defending it, even after General Winchester's capture, that it was with great reluctance they gave it up; and principally from a want of ammunition to continue the contest, and not from Proctor's threats of smoking or burning us out, which we knew to be ridiculous. A sight of the enemy's condition, which could not be prevented after our surrender, satisfied me that if we could have been supplied with ammunition, we might have held out, for no one could show more impatience to begin and continue a retreat than Proctor, embarrassed

as he was with wounded and dying men, with the prisoners he had made, and expecting to be attacked every moment by Harrison, of whose arrival at the Rapids he had been informed by an Indian runner, while the attack was going on."

[No. 8.]

Major Eve's testimony.

"A few days after General Winchester had assumed the command at fort Wayne, we were met at the St. Mary's by General Harrison, who called together all the field-officers who were at that place, with the Hon. Samuel McKee. General Harrison then stated that the army was in a deplorable situation—that he had relinquished the command to General Winchester; but from a letter which had met him at St. Mary's, he was at a loss to understand whether the Secretary of War intended that he (Harrison) or Winchester should have the command—that the troops at fort Wayne were much dissatisfied at being commanded by General Winchester, and that he had to take some pains to satisfy them. He then requested the officers present to say, who they, and the troops under their respective commands, would rather be commanded by. The answer to a man was, that they had rather be commanded by General Harrison. He then requested the officers to make that expression in *writing, and called on Mr. McKee* to draw up a written statement to that effect, observing at the same time, that

he would send it to the officers at fort Wayne, and if it was the wish of the army generally, that he should command, he would take it, and risk the consequences with the government. But upon reflection, (after General Harrison had retired,) *it was thought improper by the officers to sign the statement drawn up by Mr. McKee.* General Harrison was, in a few days afterwards, invested with the command by the Secretary of War, which made any further call on the officers unnecessary. I have only to state facts, without intending to eulogize General Winchester, or to injure General Harrison. With the former, I have very little acquaintance; but have no hesitation in saying, that I believe his conduct whilst in the army has been much misrepresented to his prejudice."

[No. 9.]

Extracts from affidavits in relation to the affair at Frenchtown, of the 22d of January, 1813, made by the late Governor Madison of Kentucky, Colonel William Lewis, and Major S. Garrard.

"Sometime between the 8th and 12th of January, we arrived at the Rapids of the Miami, where a co-operation was expected with General Tupper—but in that we were disappointed. In a few days after our arrival at the Rapids, I understood that General Winchester had received communications from the inhabitants of the Au Raisin settlement, making application to him for assistance and protection—which was repeated, with statements

that the enemy were plundering them of their property. A council of the officers was then called and their opinions taken. To the best of my recollections, they were unanimously of opinion, that a detachment ought to be sent to the relief of the inhabitants at Raisin, as soon as practicable. I cannot say whether or no General Winchester had any right to expect re-enforcements from General Tupper and Perkins, but it was generally believed that we would receive troops from them. I am well persuaded, that *could we have been re-enforced with five hundred additional men, a victory on the* 22*d of January*, 1813, *would have been the result instead of a defeat.*"

Extract from the statement of Colonel W. Lewis.

"*I think, had the General's force at Frenchtown been five hundred greater than it was, he would not have experienced a defeat.* I was immediately with General Winchester, during great part of the action, and can bear testimony to his coolness and bravery.

Extract from the affidavit of Major S. Garrard, Inspector of Brigadier-General Payne's brigade of Kentucky volunteers, made a prisoner at Frenchtown.

"On my return from Canada, I passed the Rapids, *where General Harrison informed me that General Winchester had every reason to expect re-enforcements on the* 21*st*; and further, that they were delayed in consequence of having, in the first instance, attempted an advance on the ice, which they were compelled to abandon, return back, and take Hull's road."

[No. 10.]

Orders given to General Dearborn by the Secretary of War in relation to the Niagara frontier.

June 26*th*, 1812.—" Your preparations [at Albany] it is presumed, will be made to move in a direction for *Niagara*, *Kingston*, and *Montreal*." *July* 15*th*.—" On your arrival at Albany, your attention will be directed to the security of the *northern frontier by the lakes*." *July* 20*th*.—" You will make such arrangements with Governor Tompkins, as will *place the militia, detached by him for the Niagara and other posts on the lake, under your control*." *July* 29*th*. —" Should it be advisable to make any other disposition of these restless people, [the warriors of the Seneca tribe of Indians,] you will give orders to *Mr. Granger* and the *commanding officer at Niagara*." *August* 1*st*.—" You will make a *diversion in favor of him* [General Hull] *at Niagara and Kingston*, as soon as may be practicable." How, we ask, was it possible for the General, with these orders in his portfolio, to believe, that the Niagara frontier had not been within the limits of his command? And if he did so believe, by what authority did he extend the armistice (entered into between him and Provost) to that frontier? As, however, the inaction which enabled Brock to leave his posts on the Niagara undisturbed and unmenaced, and even to carry with him a part of his force to Detroit, and there to capture Hull, his army and territory, was not noticed by any kind of disapprobation on the part of the government, the inference is fair, that it (the government) was willing to take the responsibility on itself.

[No. 11.]

Extract of a letter from Sir George Provost to General Brock, dated 30th of August, 1812.

"I consider it most fortunate, that I have been able to prosecute this object of the government (the armistice) without interfering with your operations on the Detroit. I have sent you men, money and stores of all kinds."—*See Life and Services of Sir George Provost.*

[No. 12.]

"*Albany, February 22d*, 1813.

"SIR,—In obedience to orders of the 8th instant, requiring from me 'a particular statement in relation to the affair at Queenstown,' I have the honor to transmit a journal of the incidents connected with that affair which fell under my observation.

"On the 10th of October, 1812, I waited on Lieutenant-Colonel Fenwick, commanding at fort Niagara, to report my arrival on the evening of the 9th instant, with a detachment of nearly four hundred of the thirteenth, at the Four-Mile Creek, in charge of military stores, and thirty-nine boats capable of carrying conveniently each thirty men. He informed me of an intended attack that night at Queenstown, and I requested orders to join the corps designated for it. Such orders he was not authorized to

give, but sent off an express that evening to General Van Rensselaer to procure them. They arrived (I have since learned) at Niagara about nine at night, but I was prevented by an accident from receiving them; and my detachment was saved a night's march in a storm, and exposure and march the next day, by which all the other regulars in that quarter were very considerably harassed; as, being without tents or camp equipage, they were obliged to keep on foot until they returned to their quarters. This intended attack, in which my detachment was not originally included, was to have been conducted by Colonel Van Rensselaer and Captain Machesney at the head of a party of regulars, but was defeated by some mistake or treachery of a man in charge of the boats.

"On the 11th, (the storm still continuing with unabated violence, and the road still covered with stragglers from the different detachments of regulars, which had marched the night before from fort Niagara and its vicinity to Lewistown, on the proposed expedition,) I rode to General Van Renssalaer's encampment in order to report more particularly the detachment under my command, and to request a place in the next attempt; mentioning that I should like forty-eight hours for preparation, being myself an entire stranger to the country, and the detachment being just off a long march expedition from Oswego, requiring some time for the issue of several articles of petit equipment, and for putting themselves in the best condition. It was intimated to me that I should have a part in the first attack, and that it would take place in a few days. On the 12th, about twelve o'clock, Colonel Van Rensselaer rode into my camp and informed me that I must march immediately to Lewistown—that he intended

to attack at Queenstown that night. The weather had cleared away early, and at this time my tents were struck, every musket and lock taken to pieces, and every thing in the camp going through the process of police usual on such occasions; I was also informed that the provisions for that day had not yet been received from fort Niagara and could not be before evening. Colonel Van Rensselaer stated, however, that we should be able to reach Lewistown early, and that he would have rations ready for them there. We conversed about my waiving rank with him, which I told him was impossible; but as it was equally impossible for me to command in a night-attack on a place I had never seen—as I was informed it was a critical moment which must be used—and as I was not disinclined to yield as much as possible to an officer of established reputation, and as I was, and knew my whole detachment to be anxious for an opportunity of seeing some actual service on any terms, I consented to take a part without interfering with his arrangements for it, and requested for myself only good guides, and a landing in good order at the proper point. The detachment accordingly moved a little before five o'clock in the afternoon, and marched or rather waded to Lewistown, where we arrived sometime before ten; and most of the men and some of the officers had then their first meal for that day.

October 13th.—At half-past three, Colonel Van Rensselaer woke me and informed me it was time to move. I formed the detachment, read to the officers General Van Rensselaer's orders for the battle, and conducted partly by a guide and by Colonel Van Rensselaer, marched to the river. On the way, Colonel Van Rensselaer in-

troduced my guide for the battle to me. Between four and five o'clock we embarked our first parties. The number of boats was eleven or twelve, I understood, averaging about twenty-five men each, being calculated to carry just half of our respective detachments at a time. The boats assigned to the detachment under my orders were on the right, i. e. down the stream. Having embarked the first party, and given orders to Captain Ogilvie to take charge of the embarcation of the next on the return of the boats, I chose the boat in which was my principal guide, one Hopkins, and a party selected agreeably to General Van Rensselaer's orders, for the advanced guard of my detachment in the attack. The first that reached the Canada shore was the boat in which Captain Armstrong commanded, Captain Malcolm and Lieutenant Hugunen being also on board; and the pilot being skilful, returned immediately and gave Captain Ogilvie an opportunity of executing his orders in part. The boat to which I had committed myself, (if the circumstances under which I embarked are appreciated, that phrase will not be deemed improper,) unhappily lost a row-lock on the right, which gave it a direction down the stream; and although an officer, Lieutenant Fink, remedied that evil in a great measure, so far as the oar was concerned, by holding it, the pilot wanted skill or presence of mind to alter his course; and no one else knowing any thing of the stream or point of landing, and it being perfectly dark, we were obliged to confide in him. Having in this manner gone farther down the stream than across it, we soon fell below the others, and the fire of the left of the village was directed against this boat. The pilot, panic-struck, turned about, but being ordered with severity to make the

Canada shore at any point, he made another effort *literally* groaning with fear. Hopkins, who was called on to assist him, was useless. The situation of a boat thus managed on a rapid stream when descending, not only subjected to the severest fire on the boats which was decidedly from the left of the village, (where they seemed prepared for accidents of this kind, or perhaps expected the principal debarkation below,) but also separated from the corps, may easily be imagined. It became necessary to take the steering-oar from the boatman, and return to the American shore. Here my guide, Hopkins, disappeared. Being several hundred yards below the point of embarkation, I returned on foot by the edge of the river, thinking I could more immediately procure a proper pilot, and cross from that place. In the meantime the troops landed and formed immediately on the bank, about twenty paces or less from the river, under Colonel Van Rensselaer. Here a severe fire continued for a few minutes; but having himself received several wounds, and no other person being acquainted with the force or defences of the enemy, or the topography of the village and its environs, he ordered the troops to fall below the bank by which they were in a great degree covered. In this scene, Lieutenant Valleau and Ensign Morris of the thirteenth, both men of the most estimable character, the latter quite a youth and of extraordinary promise, were killed; Lieutenant Rathbone of the first artillery, severely wounded, (since dead;) Captains Armstrong and Malcolm of the thirteenth, and Ensign Lent of the thirteenth, severely wounded, and Captain Wool of the thirteenth, also wounded.

On my return to the upper ferry, I found there a scene of confusion hardly to be described. The enemy concen-

trated their fire upon our embarking place: no person being charged with directing the boats and embarkation, or with the government of the boatmen, they forsook their duty. Persons unacquainted with the river (which was indeed the case with most of the militia who had been encamped at Lewiston several weeks, whereas *all* the regulars had been marched there that night,) would occasionally hurry into a boat as they could find one, cross, and leave it on the shore, perhaps to go adrift, or else to be brought back by the wounded and their attendants, and others returning without order or permission; and these would land where they found it convenient, and leave the boat where they landed. During this state of things (the day just beginning to break) Lieutenant Colonel Fenwick arrived with a party consisting of Major Mullany's detachments of the 13th and 23d, and Capt. Machesney's of the 6th. He found me at the river's side, anxiously endeavoring to procure boatmen, and was himself bitterly disappointed by the impossibility of crossing his detachment. Deeming it improper to expose his troops in such a situation without use, he countermarched in the best order possible, but not without some confusion, owing to the narrowness of the ravine which led down to the river, and the severe fire of grape, cannister, and shells, which was directed on it. It was about this period, and from this fire, that Captain Nelson of the 6th, a gentleman equally respected and esteemed in his official character and private life, was mortally wounded.

While things were in this state on the American shore, and partial, and generally unsuccessful and ruinous attempts to cross were made by different officers, the troops that had crossed ascended, by order of Colonel Van R., the east side of the hill of Queenstown. Captain Ogilvie has the merit with his companions of having led on this

occasion. It was a few minutes after day-break when this movement, which was altogether unobserved by the enemy, was made. Finding no work, nor even a sentinel on the hill, they marched to the north side, half way down which was a one gun battery open in rear. Near it were paraded their principal force, which our best intelligence makes to consist of the two flank companies of the 49th, commanded by Captains Williams and Dennis. These fled on a single fire from the party in their rear on the height, but soon rallied, and did not finally retreat until they had made two unsuccessful attempts to get possession of the hill. In this affair Captain Wool of the 13th, a gallant officer, commanded, and displayed a firmness and activity in the highest degree honorable to him. Capt. Ogilvie and 1st Lieutenant Kearney of the 13th, 2d Lieutenants Randolph of the Light Artillery, and Carr and Hugunin of the 13th, and Ensign Reib, were also highly distinguished. On the part of the British, General Brock, and his aid, Colonel M'Donald, fell; both of the officers commanding the companies of the 49th were wounded, and they lost about twenty or thirty taken prisoners, most of them wounded. This affair ended in a few minutes after sunrise; and of the American party, few men and not an officer was killed or wounded.

But it is necessary to state further particulars of the disasters attending the embarkation and crossing of the regulars at this period, as they were the great cause of the destruction and confusion of the regulars that day, and of so small a number of them being engaged in the subsequent scenes.

It appears, then, that of four regular officers commanding corps, who actually attempted to cross before this affair of the morning, (all of them in different boats,) not one suc-

ceeded. They were Lieutenant-Colonel Fenwick, Major Mullany, Captain Machesney, and myself.

It appears, also, that five regular officers were taken prisoners immediately on landing on the left of the village, their parties being almost entirely cut to pieces in their boats. These were, Lieutenant-Colonel Fenwick, Lieutenants Phelps (13th) and Clark, (23d) which three were severely wounded, and Lieutenants Bailey (3d Artillery) and Turner (13th Infantry).

The names of several other officers might be mentioned who were defeated in their attempts to land at the proper point, and were obliged to return.

Our best intelligence on this subject authorises me to state, that *at least* one hundred regulars were killed, wounded, and taken prisoners on the left of the village before or about sunrise.

About seven, or a few minutes past seven o'clock, I crossed; having for some time previous, as soon as the crossing became practicable, collected different detachments and sent them over. I found the senior officer there to be Captain Machesney of the 6th, who had, however, crossed but a few minutes before under my orders. Being in expectation of an immediate attack of the enemy in force, I employed myself in disposing of the prisoners which were still brought in; checking the disorders to which some of the troops seemed inclined; and arranging the fragments of the different detachments of regulars in their proper order. The gun, in the battery which has been mentioned, I found had been spiked by one of our own artillerists. In the course of an hour, in which I was momently expecting the approach of our main force with its artillery, and equipage, and supplies, a dragoon who, I suspect, threw himself into our hands, was brought to me

with a dispatch addressed to the commanding officer at Fort George. It was from the commanding officer at Chippeway, stating that the corps (Colonel Scott's) which had laid opposite the day preceding, had moved; that every thing was quiet there, and that he was ready to move. After interrogating the bearer, I sent him, in charge of an officer, with the dispatch to General Van Rensselaer. He was a native of the United States, personally known to one of our officers, and stated with great readiness and even interest, that the enemy were already in motion from that quarter, consisting of regulars and Indians, principally the latter. This gave a favorable occasion for a movement in the direction of Chippeway, and attacking this party on their march, and preventing their junction with the main force from Fort George. But at Queenstown every thing was stagnant. No considerable or regular embarkation appeared to be making on the opposite shore. A large stone house on the left of the village remained still in possession of the enemy, with two light pieces of artillery; and as not a piece of artillery had yet been brought over, it appeared impossible to attack it advantageously. After some time General Wadsworth appeared on the hill, thinking, as he told me, that his example might have a better effect than his orders in making the militia cross. He had seen the dispatch above mentioned, and was aware of the state of things on the hill. After some consultation he agreed that I should recross and represent it to General Van Rensselaer: this I did on meeting the General on the road about half a mile from the river. He informed me that he had ordered Colonel Scott across, and that he would himself cross in a short time. He ordered Captain Totten of the engineers to repair to the opposite bank, and lay out a fortified encampment, and caused the intrenching tools to be

brought down with a view to be sent after, which, however, was neglected to be done. In the course of an hour, while the General was giving his directions to his staff and preparing for the passage of the river, a small and distant fire of musketry was heard. It was evident that this attack was from the forces from Chippeway, and that it was in fact the commencement of an action which must perhaps decide the fate of the campaign in that quarter. At least half of the boats we had in the morning were lost or damaged; not half the troops had crossed, although it was by this time about eleven o'clock in the morning; Lieutenant-Colonel Scott had not received orders to take his artillery across; Captain Gibson had taken but one piece—a circumstance attributable to the small size of the only boat calculated for that service; and on reaching the embarking place, we found there a company of men, very handsomely equipped, which was just on the point of entering the boats when this firing was heard, but had thereupon halted, and now absolutely refused to cross; regarding neither the orders, nor threats, nor remonstrances of the General. Finding it useless to urge them further, he crossed, Major Mullany joining us just as we went on board the boat. The instant we ascended the hill, seeing the regulars engaged three or four hundred yards from the river, near a wood, I hastened to that point, and urging my way directly to the front, found there Lieutenant-Colonel Scott, with a gallantry I cannot too much extol, leading and animating the troops. This officer had a few minutes before checked the first charge of the Indians, and saved his troops from the disorder they had nearly been thrown into by the precipitate retreat of a party of militia. We soon reached the wood and penetrated some distance into it; but after some time it was represented to Colonel Scott

that the Indians here presented no object for a charge; that while their fire was bloody, ours produced a comparatively small effect; that the wood was not so desirable a position as one about two hundred yards nearer the river; and the intervening space being cleared, the attacks of the Indians must be made in the open field, and would, of course, be easily repelled; and we might take the order and position intended in the expected engagement. This change of position being approved by him, was made gradually and with care; small detachments being ordered to move to different points in rear, as with a view to meet other attacks, Colonel Scott and myself remaining with the last. After this movement had been accomplished, the fire of the Indians was of course less general and fatal, but it was never intermitted during the remainder of the day. About the time of this movement the first detachments of the British army were seen at a great distance on the plain on their march from Fort George. Meanwhile our numbers instead of increasing were diminishing. The boat in which General Van Renssalaer came over, returned immediately full of men, who had concealed themselves under the bank for the purpose of seizing opportunities to recross, and had embarked in his presence; and I understand they even crowded into the very boat in which he afterwards returned, with a view to bring over his principal force which was still on the American shore. At about a quarter of an hour after two o'clock in the afternoon, the British troops paraded in front of us, we being formed on the edge of the hill—the village in our rear, the river on our left, and a bush cantonment on our right. In this were disposed a number of regulars and a small party of volunteer riflemen, commanded by Lieutenant Smith of the militia, who was highly distinguished by his activity and courage. These

served to keep the Indians in check, although they still maintained a galling fire on the right flank. My opinion of the British force, founded on my own observation and subsequent information is, that they had from four to five hundred regulars, with four pieces of artillery, from five to six hundred militia, and three hundred Indians. Our whole force under arms at this time was less than three hundred, with but one piece of artillery, and not a dozen rounds for it; yet I am well persuaded a retreat, much less a surrender, was not thought of; and that the troops were in fact in as high spirits as if we had been superior. Such was the state of things when a note from General Van Rensselaer to General Wadsworth arrived, commanding him to save his troops, informing him that not a regiment or company would move to reinforce us; that he had himself seen the movements of the enemy, and knew that we were overpowered; and that he would endeavor to furnish boats and cover our retreat. He added in a postcript, that General Wadsworth might nevertheless govern himself according to circumstances under his more immediate view. General Wadsworth called together the senior officers of corps, read this letter, and asked their opinions. Nothing was decided on. Meanwhile, the enemy, manœuvering with great caution if not with some hesitation, moved in force by their right towards the river in such a way as to reconnoitre our whole front and left in part. Finding it difficult to believe, perhaps, that so small a body of men as that in view was the whole force they were to contend with, they then returned by their left, always skirting the woods, and presented themselves in line on our right flank. During these marches and counter-marches of the enemy, we were consulting, and at last determined to avail ourselves of the possibility of retreating suggested in General Van Rensse-

laer's letter. It was designed, accordingly, to throw our right on the road leading from the hill to the village, and form with the river in our rear. To do this it was necessary to march by the left which brought the militia in front of the column. They soon broke, on the commencement of the enemy's fire, and a perfect rout ensued. Not a boat being ready, nor any appearance of an attempt to bring them, we surrendered—were taken into the village of Queenstown, and treated with the greatest delicacy and humanity by General Sheaffe. The wounded were attended to here; the prisoners, private soldiers, were collected and marched to Newark; and, after being about an hour in the village, we marched with a guard, which was necessary to protect us from the Indians, to Fort George. We arrived there just at dark.

I am, with great respect,

Your obedient Servant,

JOHN CHRYSTIE,

Lieutenant-Colonel 13th.

General THOMAS H. CUSHING, Adjutant-General.

[No. 13.]

"Colonel Cochrane, formerly an aid-de-camp to Sir George Prevost, and at present Military Inspector, and attached to the District of New Brunswick, states, 'that the regular troops in the Canadas and New Brunswick, at the commencement of the war of 1812 between the United States and Great Britain, did not exceed ten thousand

men; but were increased from time to time, till, in 1815, their numbers amounted to about sixteen thousand five hundred.'

(Signed,) JAMES WATSON WEBB."

April 20*th*, 1830.

[No. 14.]

For orders given from the 26th of June to the 1st of August to General Dearborn, see Appendix No. 10. To these we now add the following:—*August the* 8*th*.—"Should the recruits and volunteers be found inadequate to immediate operations on the frontier, you are instructed to call on any Governor, or commander of a division or a brigade, for as many militia as you may deem necessary." *August* 16*th*.—"Proceed with the utmost vigor in your operations." *August* 26*th*.—"Every thing indicates the necessity of early and efficient operations on the Niagara and posts below." *September* 21*st*.—"Your arrangements for an attack on the British posts on the Niagara will, it is hoped, be in season." The General about this time proposed an attack to be made at the same time on Fort George, Kingston, and Montreal; to which the Secretary answered, "The President thinks not a moment should be lost in getting possession of the British posts at Niagara and Kingston, or at least of the former."

[No. 15.]

Letters from the Secretary of War to General Dearborn.

War Department, February 10th, 1813.

"I have the President's orders to communicate to you, as expeditiously as possible, the outline of campaign which you will immediately institute and pursue against Upper Canada:—

1st. 4000 troops will be assembled at Sackett's harbor.

2d. 3000 will be brought together at Buffalo and its vicinity.

3d. The former of these corps will be embarked and transported under convoy of the fleet to Kingston, where they will be landed. Kingston, its garrison, and the British ships wintering in the harbor of that place will be its first object. Its second object will be York, (the capital of Upper Canada) the stores collected, and the two frigates building there. Its third object, Forts George and Erie and their dependencies. In the attainment of this last there will be a co-operation between the two corps. The composition of these will be as follows:

1st.	Bloomfield's brigade, - - -	1,436
2d.	Chandler's do, - - -	1,044
3d.	Philadelphia detachment, - - -	400
4th.	Baltimore do, - - -	300
5th.	Carlisle do, - - -	200
6th.	Greenbush do, - - -	400
7th.	Sackett's Harbor do, - - - -	250
		4,030

8th. Several corps at Buffalo under the command of General Porter, and the recruits belonging thereto, - -	3,000
Total,	7,030

The time for executing the enterprise will be governed by the opening of Lake Ontario, which usually takes place about the 1st of April.

The Adjutant-General has orders to put the more southern detachments in march as expeditiously as possible. The two brigades on Lake Champlain you will move so as to give them full time to reach their place of destination by the 25th of March. The route by Elizabeth will, I think, be the shortest and best. They will be replaced by some new raised regiments from the east.

You will put into your movements as much privacy as may be compatible with their execution. They may be masked by reports that Sackett's Harbor is in danger, and that their principal effort will be made on the Niagara, in co-operation with General Harrison. As the route to Sackett's Harbor and to Niagara is for a considerable distance the same, it may be well to intimate, even in orders, that the latter is the destination of the two brigades now at Lake Champlain.

(Signed,) JOHN ARMSTRONG."

War Department, February 24th, 1813.

"Before I left New-York, and, till very recently, since my arrival here, I was informed through various channels, that a winter or spring attack upon Kingston was not practicable on account of the snow, which generally lies to the depth of two, and sometimes of three feet, over all that northern region during those seasons. Hence it is that

in the plan recently communicated, it was thought safest and best to make the attack by a combination of naval and military means, and to approach our object, not by directly crossing the St. Lawrence on the ice, but by setting out from Sackett's Harbor, in concert with, and under convoy of the fleet. Later information differs from that on which this plan was founded; and the fortunate issue of Major Forsyth's last expedition shews, that small enterprises, at least, may be successfully executed at the present season. The advices, given in your letter of the 14th instant, have a bearing also on the same point, and to the same effect. If the enemy be really weak at Kingston, and approachable by land and ice, Pike, (who will be a brigadier in a day or two,) may be put into motion from Lake Champlain by the Chateaugay route, (in sleighs) and, with the two brigades, cross the St. Lawrence where it may be thought best, destroy the armed ships, and seize and hold Kingston, until you can join him with the other corps destined for the future objects of the expedition; and, if pressed by Prevost before such junction can be effected, he may withdraw himself to Sackett's Harbor, or other place of security, on our side of the line. This would be much the shorter road to the object, and perhaps the safer one, as the St. Lawrence is now every where well bridged, and offers no obstruction to either attack or retreat. Such a movement, will, no doubt, be soon known to Prevost, and cannot but disquiet him. The dilemma it presents will be serious. Either he must give up his western posts, or, to save them, he must carry himself in force, and promply, to Upper Canada. In the latter case he will be embarrassed for subsistence. His convoys of provision will be open to our attacks, on a line of nearly one hundred miles, and his position at Montreal much weakened. Another decided advantage

will be, to let us into the secret of his real strength. If he be able to make heavy detachments to cover, or to recover Kingston, and to protect his supplies, and after all maintain himself at Montreal and on Lake Champlain, he is stronger than I imagined, or than any well-authenticated reports make him to be.

With regard to our magazines, my belief is, that we have nothing to fear; because, as stated above, Provost's attention must be given to the western posts and to our movements against them. He will not dare to advance southwardly while a heavy corps is operating on his flank and menacing his line of communication. But on the other supposition, they (the magazines) may be easily secured; 1st, by taking them to Willsborough; or 2d, to Burlington; or 3d, by a militia call, to protect them where they are. Orders are given for the march of the eastern volunteers, excepting Ulmer's regiment and two companies of axe-men sent to open the route to the Chaudiere.

"The southern detachments will be much stronger than I had supposed. That from Philadelphia will amount to nearly one thousand effectives.

(Signed,) "JOHN ARMSTRONG."

[No. 16.]

Extract from a letter of the late Major-General Brown.

"*Head-Quarters, Brownville, July 20th*, 1813.

"I have delayed giving the estimate you requested, of the enemy's forces in Canada, during the years 1812 and

1813 of the late war, that I might examine my minutes and papers the more carefully.

"At the commencement of the war, Sir George Provost had the command of very few regulars. The number placed under the orders of Governor Brock for the defence of Upper Canada, was never equal to twelve hundred men; and at no time did the command of this distinguished chief consist of less than 'one third of old men and invalids fit only for garrison duty.' No considerable increase of force on the part of the enemy took place during the campaign of 1812, and I have never been able to discover that at the opening of the campaign of 1813, [June 26th,] there were more than five thousand regular troops in the Canadas. The force, whatever it may have been, was principally in the Upper province. By the 27th of May of that year, the enemy had assembled on the Niagara about two thousand men, to resist any incursion—and at Kingston, about one thousand, for the projected attack on Sacket's Harbor, under the command of Sir George in person. The two columns would not have exceeded *three thousand* combatants, and I have it from unquestionable authority that the left column sustained a loss of full *four hundred* men."

[No. 17.]

Letter of Colonel Connor, of the 18*th of March*, 1816.

"Of the immense depôt I know nothing but by report, which stated that it had been carried to Sacket's Harbor,

and had there been burnt by the mistake of the Commodore's brother. Of the contents of Sheafe's papers, many of which Colonel King and myself examined, I know enough to convince me that during the winter and spring of 1813, the British garrison of Kingston was extremely weak and quite insufficient for defence.

"I am, &c.

(Signed) "SAMUEL CONNOR."

"GENERAL ARMSTRONG."

[No. 18.]

Letter from the Secretary of War to General Dearborn.

(*Private.*)

"*Washington*, 15*th May*, 1813.

"DEAR GENERAL,—Your affair of the 27th ult. is matter of public and private congratulation; much qualified, however, by the loss of Pike and the escape of the frigate, the capture or destruction of which, was, according to the Commodore's calculations, to give him a decided and permanent ascendency on the Lake. Another drawback upon it, less apt to be noticed by ordinary critics, but in itself very vexatious, is the escape also of Sheafe with the main body of his regular force. Under the present circumstances of Great Britain, bound as she is, neck and heels, to the prosecution of the war in Europe, she can ill afford to send to this country, either men or money, to support the *petite guerre* in which she has so inconsiderately involved herself with us. From informa-

tion the most direct and respectable, I am assured that her regular force in both the Canadas has at no time since the declaration of war exceeded three thousand men; and that at the present time, by casualties, (death, desertion, &c., always at work thinning the ranks of an army) this force is reduced at least one-fifth. Taking then this fact for granted, we cannot doubt but that in all cases in which a British commander is constrained to act defensively, his policy will be that adopted by Sheafe—to prefer the preservation of his troops to that of his post, and thus carrying off the kernel leave us only the shell. To counteract this policy, becomes, therefore, a special duty on our part—requiring the strictest attention, as well in projecting as in executing our attacks. On this head, my distance from you and my very insufficient knowledge of the topography of the country in which you act, make it improbable that any suggestion I could make, has not already presented itself to your mind. As a general maxim, however, I may be permitted to say, that in concentrating our whole force on any given point of an enemy's position, we necessarily leave all others open to him for escape; whence it follows, that to deprive him of this advantage, two attacks (if our force permit it) should be made, and one of these so directed as to shut him out from all means of retreat; or at least of forcing him into roads, where finding little or no accommodation, he may sustain the greatest possible loss. In your late affair, I have thought (perhaps erroneously) that had the descent been made between the town and the barracks, things would have turned out better. On that plan, the two batteries you had to encounter, would have been left out of the combat; and Sheafe, instead of retreating to

Kingston, must have sought refuge at fort George. In the affair before you, nothing will, I hope, be omitted, nor any thing be misunderstood; and that with regard to the garrison in particular, it will not be permitted to escape to-day that it may fight us to-morrow. For obvious reasons, I have made this letter private. On the records of the War Department it would appear to carry with it an official censure, whereas, it is in truth nothing more than the suggestions of one, who for both your sake, and his own, wishes you the fullest and most unqualified prosperity."

[No. 19.]

"*Head-Quarters, Kingston, July* 11*th*, 1813.

"Dear Sir,—Having sent Captain McDonald to England with despatches, your letter of the 27th ultimo, addressed to him, I opened. I was much pleased it contained a report of Mr. R. Dickson's arrival at Mackinac on the 11th.

"Your wants have been supplied as far as I had the ability of doing so. In addition to the specie and paper-money, and articles of clothing, forwarded for the right division from hence, in charge of Captain Chambers and Lieutenant M'Clean, a considerable supply of shoes, trowsers, &c., were embarked in a flotilla going to York a few days ago, for Detroit and Michilimackinac.

"The ordnance and naval stores you require must be taken from the enemy, whose resources on Lake Erie

must become yours. I am much mistaken if you do not find Captain Barclay well disposed to play that game. I conclude the whole of the forty-first regiment is placed under your command. The presents for the Indians are not arrived from England, but I shall direct two hundred guns for them, to be purchased at Montreal and forwarded to you, with a proportion of powder and ball by the Ottawa.

"I request you will communicate with me upon all occasions, with the characteristic frankness which distinguishes a zealous and good soldier.

"I have the honor, &c.

"GEORGE PROVOST."

"BRIGADIER-GENERAL PROCTOR."

St. David's, July 18*th*, 1813.

"SIR,—I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 10th instant, and have to inform you in reply thereto, that a force of nearly four hundred men are directed to march in successive divisions upon Long Point, as detailed in my letter to General Proctor of this day's date. I am fully impressed with the indispensable necessity of an attack upon Presque Isle, and should have co-operated with you long ago, had I possessed the means of so doing. I trust it will not yet be too late, and that you will lose no time in making your arrangements for taking up the troops from Long Point.

"I have the honor to be, Sir,

"Your most obedient servant,

"FRANCIS DE ROTTENBURG,

"*Major-General.*"

"COMMODORE BARCLAY."

[No. 20.]

Extract from Governor Duncan's Report.

"McAffee, the historian of the late war, and Dawson, the biographer of General Harrison, have studiously kept out of view, that the object of the invasion was the *destruction of our ships under Commodore Perry at Presque Isle, and the boats and stores at Cleveland.* These were looked upon with great solicitude by the British, were reconnoitred, and on one or two occasions were attempted to be destroyed by landing a small force from their fleet.

"They have also failed to account for the movement of the whole British force down the Lake in the direction of Cleveland and Erie, before their defeat at Sandusky; which was attacked to gratify their Indian allies, who demanded the scalps and plunder of the place. They have kept out of view the fact, that *General Harrison had determined to retreat to the interior after burning all the supplies he had collected;* that he ordered Major Croghan to *abandon and burn fort Stephenson;* that his *refusal to obey and failure to arrive at head-quarters*, prevented this retreat, and *consequent destruction of our fleet and millions of public stores;* and the exposure also, of *five hundred miles of frontier, to the combined enemy.* Both have stated, that General Harrison never doubted that Major Croghan would be able to repulse an enemy of near two thousand men (and which they say he understood to be five thousand) with *one hundred and thirty men*, (Croghan's effective force on the day of the battle,) *one six-pounder*, with ammunition for only *seven shots*, and about *forty rounds for the*

small arms, when the fact was notorious, that General Harrison was heard to say during the siege, while the firing could be heard in his camp, and speaking of Croghan, '*The blood be on his own head*, I wash my hands of it,' not doubting for a moment, nor did any one with him, that the garrison would be cut off.

"These historians have also published two letters, as part of their history, written by Major Croghan and others, to allay *the excitement against Harrison, for his neglect to support Croghan, when he lay within three hours' march of the fort, with a strong force.* Those patriotic officers wrote these letters, it has been said, to save the army and prevent them from following up the indignation manifested in the States against the General destined to command them—believing it of the utmost importance at that moment, that he should stand well with the army and the country; and it is further said that they were written under the belief, that every thing should be placed before the public in a proper light at the end of the campaign.

(Signed) "JOSEPH DUNCAN."

"GENERAL MERCER,

"*Chairman of a Committee of the House of Representatives.*"

Second Order to Major Croghan.

"*Head-Quarters, Camp Seneca,*
"*Adjutant-General's Office, July 27th*, 1813.

"SIR,—Immediately on receiving this letter you will abandon fort Stephenson, set fire to it and repair with your command this night to head-quarters. Cross the river and come up upon the opposite side. If you should deem, and find it impracticable to make good your march

to this station, take the road to Huron and pursue it with the utmost circumspection and despatch. By command.

"God be with you.

"A. H. HOLMES, *Assistant Adjutant-General.*

"P. S. Effect your retreat in the manner heretofore directed you.

"A. H. HOLMES, *A. A. G.*"

"MAJOR CROGHAN."

[No. 21.]

Letter from Colonel R. M. Johnson.

"*December* 22*d*, 1834.

"DEAR SIR,—I have just received your favor of the 17th, containing certain inquiries as to the battle of the Thames, 5th of October, 1813, in Upper Canada.

"1st. The mounted regiment under my command, consisted of one thousand men at the time of the charge.

"2d. They were armed with muskets and rifles, and tomahawks or small hatchets, and butcher-knives.

"3d. The British had one brass field-piece, (six-pounder,) the same that was taken by us in the revolutionary war at Saratoga, and retaken from us at the surrender of Detroit by General Hull. It was placed in the road near the Thames, not far from the centre of the British line.

"4th. The British formed two lines, resting on the Thames and running out to a swamp two or three hundred yards from the river and parallel with it.

"5th. I presume Proctor was stationed considerably in the rear of his troops, and probably commenced his flight the moment he saw his forces defeated and taken prisoners.

"6th. I think the best ground for defence was selected.

"7th. The [militia] infantry were stationed a reasonable distance in the rear of the mounted regiment, in order of battle, say from one half to one mile. My brother, Colonel James Johnson, charged the British forces with the first battalion, (five hundred men,) and succeeded without the loss of a man—one horse killed, shot in the head—in advancing, he received the fire of one line of the British, and then of the other, in close succession; the cannon was not fired. I crossed the swamp with the second battalion, (five hundred men,) and fought against the Indians, (supposed fourteen hundred warriors, under Tecumseh,) without any aid whatever. A regiment was ordered to re-enforce me at the close of the battle; but did not reach us until the battle was over and the Indians had fled. The official report is incorrect in saying, that the hard fighting on the left was by a part of Governor Shelby's men. We had no assistance, except that of a few scattering volunteers from the infantry, who might have pushed into our ranks. I was wounded and could give no information to the commanding General, and he did not know at the time he made his report, that I had crossed the swamp with my regiment; as when he gave the order to make the charge, he thought from my information, that I could not cross the swamp; which I discovered I could do a few minutes after he left me, and believing that it was most safe, and that my regiment was sufficient, I divided my force as stated above, and the victory on both

sides was complete; but, no doubt, the instantaneous capture of the British, and the early death of the Indian chief, were powerful operating causes in our favor.

I am, &c.,

(Signed) R. M. JOHNSON.

N. B. *It is due to truth to state, that I requested General Harrison to permit me to charge*, and *knowing that I had trained my men for it during our short service, he gave the order.*

[No. 22.]

Red Hook, January 2*d*, 1812.

DEAR EUSTIS—Yesterday's mail brought your hypothetical note, which I hasten to answer by a few suggestions that, if approved, may be readily drawn out into as much detail as may be useful.

1st. An abundant supply of what is technically called the *materiel* of war is indispensable. This single term includes arms, equipments, and ammunition, in all their varieties; tents, blankets, and clothing; cavalry and draught-horses; oxen, wagons, carts, entrenching tools, &c. &c. To make a competent provision of these will require a large expenditure of money, but to this you must submit, for two unanswerable reasons—the one, that without them, war cannot be made, either morally or successfully; the other, that their cost, *now*, will be from 50 *to* 100 *per cent. less* than it will be *after the declaration of war.*

2d. When obtained, these supplies should be placed in magazines, the location of which must be governed by two considerations—the security of the articles deposited in them, and the facility and safety with which these may be brought into use. To each magazine should be attached a Laboratory, for fixing ammunition, making and mending gun and other carriages, repairing arms, &c.

3d. If you have remote posts, liable to attack, and difficult to sustain, and having no direct or important bearing on the progress or issue of the war, hasten to dismantle them and withdraw the garrisons.

4th. Resting, as the line of Canadian defence does, in its whole extent, on navigable lakes and rivers, no time should be lost in getting a naval ascendancy on both, for *cœteris paribus*, the belligerent who is the first to obtain this advantage, will (miracles excepted) win the game. Whether the commercial craft, at present employed on these waters, can be made useful for the purpose, I do not know; but among the sages, now assembled at Washington, you cannot fail to find some one who can answer the question.

5th. Without a knowledge, nearly approximating the truth, of the force you will have to contend with; of the disposition made of this, and of the character, physical and artificial, of the posts occupied by it, you will be compelled to make war *conjecturally*; and, of course, on data furnishing no just conclusions with regard to either the number or composition of your own army, or of the kind and extent of operations which ought to be assigned to it. That a state of peace, like the present, will be more favorable than one of war for acquiring this preliminary information, cannot be doubted; and if it be true, as I have been told,

that the British posts are victualled by American contractors, these agents (who by their vocation must have free access to them) may probably form the safest and surest medium through which to obtain it. But, whatever be the means employed for accomplishing this object, a moment should not be lost in putting them into exercise.

6th. The number and composition of your army (as already suggested) should be decided by the service given it to perform, and the kind and degree of resistance your enemy may be able to oppose to it. Though, from present appearances, it be true that the exigencies of the war in Europe will disable England from sending promptly any important aid, strictly military, to the Canadas; it does not follow that she will omit to employ such other means as she may possess, to supply the deficiency. Of these, the most vexatious to us would be a portion of her armed vessels, acting separately or in squadron, on our long and defenceless line of sea-coast; while, at the same time, hordes of savages are let loose on the women and children of the West. And that, in the event of war, Great Britain will not hesitate to employ this policy in both its branches, cannot be doubted by those who have any recollection of what her past conduct towards the United States has been, or who are now capable of perceiving the impunity to herself and the mischief to us with which she may pursue it.

From this general view of the subject it follows, that in composing your army, you must be careful to provide corps specially adapted for two purposes—the *protection of your own frontiers*, eastern and western, and the *invasion* of those of your enemy. Of each of these I offer the following outline.

For the former, divide your coast into military districts —open in each a rendezvous for *volunteer-association* and *local defence*, with engagements commensurate with the war, and pay and emoluments, such as are now given to the regular army. Of this description of force the maximum may be *twenty battalions* located as follows:

1 at Portsmouth, 2 at Boston, 1 at Newport, 3 at New-York, 1 at Philadelphia, 3 at Baltimore, 3 at Norfolk, 2 at Charlestown, 1 at Savannah, and 2 at New-Orleans. Each of these stations to be well supplied with heavy guns for position—furnaces for heating shot, light pieces, well horsed, for field service, and muskets and bayonets for camp and garrison duty. Corps, thus constituted and equipped, well instructed in the use of their arms and respectably commanded, will do much to check, if they do not entirely prevent, predatory excursion—the evil most to be apprehended from the crews of single ships, or from those of small squadrons not sustained by infantry.

For western defence employ western men, accustomed to the rifle and the forest, and not unacquainted with the usages and stratagems of Indian warfare. To their customary arms add a pistol and a sabre; and to ensure celerity of movement, mount them on horseback. Give them a competent leader and a good position, within striking distance of Indian villages or British settlements. Why not at Detroit, where you have a strong fortress and a detachment of artillerists? Recollect, however, that this position, far from being good, would be positively bad unless your naval means have an ascendancy on Lake Erie; because Buffalo, Erie, Cleaveland, and the two Sanduskys must be its base or source of supply. The maximum of this corps may be six battalions.

Lastly, for a successful invasion of the Canadas, (the great operation of the war, because that only by which Great Britain can be brought to a sense of justice,) you must rely on a regular army. Of this description of force, you have now the skeletons of ten regiments; which, if completed, will give you ten thousand combatants—a corps that, in the present circumstances of England, and aided by militia for the purposes of demonstration, will be competent to great achievements. Hasten then to fill up the rank and file of your present establishment: and to existing inducements for enlisting, add an increased pay, and a liberal bounty at the end of the war.

Should better information with regard to your enemy's strength make an increase of your own expedients, give one or two additional battalions to each of your seven regiments of infantry—a mode of increasing an army much to be preferred to creations altogether new. For, besides being obviously more economical, the direct association of raw recruits with old soldiers has the effect of making the former efficient in half the time it would otherwise take to do so—the example of comrades being a principle of tuition much more active than the instruction of officers.

On this head it is but necessary to add, that the whole of your disposable or field force, when obtained, should be immediately assembled at some given point, from which, the moment that war should be authorized, it may begin its operations. Under present views, Albany, or its neighborhood, should be the place of this rendezvous; because, besides other recommendations, it is *here* that all the roads leading from the central portion of the United States to the Canadas, *diverge*—a circumstance which, while it keeps up your enemy's doubts as to your real point of attack,

cannot fail to keep his means of defence in a state of division.

7th. In sketching the composition of an army, two branches of it, the one having charge of its discipline and its movements, the other of its subsistence, must not be forgotten. For the first (a General Staff) I refer you to Grimoard's publication, which I sent to the war department from Paris, some years ago. If this book be not already translated into English, no time should be lost in naturalizing it for the use of the army.

The second or feeding department, is of three kinds—that founded on Cæsar's maxim, that "war should sustain war," though fashionable at present, is, in fact, a system of indiscriminate plunder; forbidden alike, as I hope, by the moral feelings and political views of the United States. The remaining two are sufficiently known, under the names of the Contract and Commissariat systems. To recommend either, as exclusively and under all circumstances the best, would show only great ignorance or great folly. In old and well-peopled districts, where corn and cattle are abundant, prices little subject to change, roads safe and unobstructed, and the means of transportation (teams or boats) easily procured, the contract plan is the best—because the most economical, sufficiently punctual in the discharge of its engagements, and, from the settled character of its terms, rarely, if ever, embarrassing the government with extra or unexpected charges. In districts of an opposite character, where the population is thin and poor, supplies scarce and high priced, roads few and bad, and much exposed to obstruction, the commissariat must be submitted to; though certainly liable to great abuse, from the ignorance, indolence, or knavery of the agents em-

ployed. The best remedy for the evils of this system will be found in subjecting the agents to military law, and in rigorously enforcing its provisions.

8th. and lastly. A project of campaign, conformed to military maxims, must embrace three things: 1st. *An object of important or decisive character;* the attainment of which will give a successful issue to the campaign if not to the war. 2d. *A line of operation*, as short and perpendicular to this object, as possible; and 3d. *A well secured base*, on which must be accumulated and ready for transportation, all supplies necessary to sustain the operation. Each of these rules has its own special laws, but it is only of the first that I will say more at present than a few words.

In invading a neighboring and independent territory like Canada—having a frontier of immense extent; destitute of means strictly its own for the purposes of defence; separated from the rest of the empire by an ocean, and having to this but one outlet—this *outlet forms your true object or point of attack;* because, if gained, every thing depending upon it is gained also. Such was the consequence of the capture of Quebec in the war, which ended in 1763; and such would again be the consequence of the reduction of that capital, had we the means to effect it. Unfortunately, from deficient foresight in the government, these are wanting. Still, though unable to do what in the abstract would be best, it by no means follows that we should omit to do what may be both practicable and expedient. Such, in my opinion, would be the *capture of Montreal*—a post, which, commanding alike the navigation of the St. Lawrence and the Otawa, if seized and held, would give the same control over all that portion of the Canadas lying

westward of itself, that Quebec now exercises over the whole territory: Kingston, York, Fort George, Fort Erie, and Malden, cut off from their common base, must soon and necessarily fall. To reach this object, your line of operation may be taken on either side of Lake Champlain, provided you have secured the command of the lake; in which case also, Albany, Greenbush, Troy, Whitehall, &c. covered by a dense population, and secured by a large river, no where fordable by infantry, will give you a sufficient base. When begun, the movement should be made rapidly and audaciously; and the better to secure its success, three demonstrations by masses of militia, may be employed: one on the Niagara, to keep within their walls the garrisons of Forts George and Erie; a second at Sackett's Harbor, to produce a similar effect on whatever force might be found at Kingston; and a third in Vermont, so placed on the eastern side of the Sorel as to menace the British posts on that river.

Though taking for granted, as stated above, that the capture of Montreal would involve that of all posts westward from itself, it will no doubt be proper that the six battalions of mounted gun-men should march on Malden, as soon as they shall be apprised that the campaign on Lake Champlain is opened. And here we must stop: what remains of the subject, being *Tactical*, and governed by circumstances as they occur in the camp or the field, must be entirely left to the genius and judgment of your Commanding General. I am, &c.

(Signed) JOHN ARMSTRONG.

Hon. WILLIAM EUSTACE, Secretary of War.

[No. 23.]

Letter from General Harrison to the Secretary of War.

"*Head-Quarters, Chilicothe, March* 17*th*, 1813.

"Sir,—The known candor of your character, is a sufficient security for my receiving your pardon for the liberty I take, in making objections to the plan of operations communicated in your letter of the 5th instant. If there is a positive certainty of our getting the command of Lake Erie, and having a regular force of three thousand five hundred, or even three thousand, well-disciplined men, the proposed plan of setting out from Cleveland, and landing on the northern shore, below Malden, would, perhaps, be the one by which that place and its dependencies could be most easily reduced. I am unacquainted with the extent of the preparations that are making to obtain the naval superiority upon Lake Erie, but, should they fail, and the troops be assembled at Cleveland, it would be difficult to get again upon the proper track for making the attack round the head of the Lake. The attempt to cross the Lake from Cleveland should not be made with any other than well-disciplined troops. A comparatively smaller number of men of this description could effect the object, and for those, means of conveyance might be found; but the means of transporting such an army as would be required of militia or undisciplined regulars, could not be procured. I can see no reason why Cleveland should be preferred as the point of embarkation for the troops, or the deposite of provisions or stores. These are already accumulated at the Rapids of Miami, or in situations to be easily sent thither, to an

amount nearly equal to the consumption of a protracted campaign. Although the expense and difficulty of transporting the provisions, artillery and stores for an army, round the head of the Lake, would be very considerable, the Lake being possessed by our ships, and the heavy baggage taken in boats along its margin, the troops would find no difficulty in the land route. The force contemplated in your letter is, in my opinion, not sufficient to secure success. Admitting that the whole should be raised by the time pointed out, they would be very little superior to militia; the officers having, with scarcely an exception, to learn their duty before they could instruct their men; we have therefore no alternative but to make up by numbers the deficiency of discipline.

"I am well aware of the intolerable expense which attends the employment of a large militia force. We are now, however, in a situation to avoid those errors which made that of the last campaign so peculiarly heavy. Our supplies are procured, and so deposited that the period for the march of the army from the advanced posts can be ascertained to an hour, and of course the troops need not be called out until the moment they are to act. Experience has convinced me that militia are more efficient in the early, than in the latter part of their service. Upon the whole, it is my decided opinion, that the Rapids of Miami should be the point of rendezvous for the troops, as well as the principal depôt. Indeed, it must necessarily be the first deposite—the provisions for the army being so placed that they can be taken to the Lake in no other way. The artillery and a considerable supply of ammunition are already there. Boats and *perouges* have been built in considerable numbers on the Au Glaize and

St. Mary's rivers; and every exertion is now making to increase them, intended for the double purpose of taking down the provisions to the Rapids, and for coasting the Lake with the baggage of the army in its advance. I had calculated upon being able partially to use this mode of transportation, even if the enemy should continue their naval superiority on the Lake; but with this advantage on our side, the whole baggage of the army could be safely and expeditiously carried along the coast in the boats and *perouges*, which could be taken into the strait to transport the army to the Canada shore.

"As I have before observed, the army, unencumbered with heavy baggage, would find no difficulty in marching round the Lake at any season, but what the enemy would create, and we have the means of subsisting a force that would be irresistible.

"The objections to proceeding this way, stated in my letter to Colonel Munroe, arose from the time that would be necessary to construct boats after we should have arrived at the strait; but this objection is entirely obviated by our obtaining the command of the Lake, as the boats and *perouges* built upon the Miami will answer the purpose. With regard to the quantum of force, my opinion is, that not only the regular troops, designated in your letter, but a large auxiliary corps of militia should be employed. The only objection arises from the expensiveness of troops of that description. This, however, could not be an object, considering the very short time that it would be necessary to employ them. Let the moment for the commencement of the march from the Rapids be fixed, and the militia might be taken to that point, proceed and accomplish the object, and return home in two months.

"Amongst the reasons which make it necessary to employ a large force, I am sorry to mention the dismay and disinclination to the service which appears to prevail in the western country; numbers must give that confidence which ought to be produced by conscious valor and intrepidity, which never existed in any army in a superior degree, than amongst the greater part of the militia who were with me through the winter. The new draughts from this State are entirely of another character, and are not to be depended on. I have no doubt, however, but a sufficient number of good men can be procured, and should they be allowed to serve on horseback, Kentucky would furnish some regiments that would be not inferior to those that fought at the river Raisin; and they were, in my opinion, superior to any militia that ever took the field in modern times. Eight troops of cavalry have been formed in Kentucky, to offer me their services, and several of them were intended for twelve months' volunteers. Governor Shelby has some thoughts of taking the field in person—a number of good men will follow him.

"Every exertion shall in the meantime be used to forward the recruiting service; for a few weeks I think that my service would be more useful in that than in any other employment."

"*War Department, April 4th*, 1813.

"SIR,—Your despatches of the 17th ultimo, from Chilicothe, have been received, and I hasten to repeat to you the views of the President, in relation to the next campaign, and the injunctions growing out of these, with regard to the employment of militia, &c.

"Our first object is to get a command of the Lakes.

Means to accomplish this object have been taken, and we have the fullest assurance, that by the first day of June it will be accomplished.

"This fact assumed, there can be no longer a doubt by what means, or by what route, the division of the army assigned to you, ought to approach Malden. A passage by water will carry you directly to the fortress you would attack, without impairing your strength by fatigue, or diminishing it by battle. A passage by land will, on the other hand, call for great efforts, and expose you to great losses, which if they do not destroy, will at least cripple you. The former will be easy, safe and economical; the latter, difficult, dangerous, and enormously expensive.

"On the other supposition, that we fail to obtain command of the Lake, a new question will arise—whether the campaign shall take an offensive or defensive character? Be this question determined as it may, the utmost extent which can be given to the force employed, will be seven thousand effectives.

"Various reasons determine this point. The enemy have never had in the field, for the defence of Malden, more than two thousand men. Their number has no doubt been hitherto limited by their means of subsistence, and this cause is not likely to suffer any material change in their favor during the ensuing campaign. More than seven thousand men, therefore, would be unnecessary on our part. Again, to maintain a greater number, would be impracticable in the present state of the treasury.

"It now remains only to signify to you, clearly and distinctly, the kind of force the government mean hereafter to employ in offensive operations, if it can be obtained.

"When the legislature, at their last session, adopted the

measure of augmenting the army to fifty-two regiments of the line, it was expressly with the view of superseding hereafter the necessity of employing militia, excepting in moments of critical invasion. In obedience to this policy, the President assigned to the eighth military district of the United States, four of these new regiments, which, if filled, and superadded to the two regiments of the line now in that district, and the twenty-fourth now in march for it, will give a total of seven regiments, or seven thousand men. This number forbids the belief, that any employment of militia draughts will be necessary, when it shall have been collected. Until, however, this be done, or at least until time be given for the experiment, so many militia only are to be called out, as shall be necessary for the defence of your posts on the Miami, and of your depôts of provision on the Lake. And should the recruiting service go on less prosperously in the patriotic States of Kentucky and Ohio, than in other parts of the Union, you are in that case, and in that case only, authorized to call out so many militia draughts as will make good the deficiency; and organizing these under the rules already prescribed, await the farther orders of the President in your camp at the Rapids.

"To these orders I have to add, that you will regard it as your duty to keep this department regularly and frequently informed of the actual condition of the troops under your command; as well in regard to equipment and supplies of provision and ammunition, as to number, discipline and health; and that your weekly and monthly reports shall include also the state of the ordnance and quartermaster's departments, noting particularly, the number of horses and oxen employed by both. You will readily perceive the necessity of giving this order, when I state, that

no return of any description from your division of the army, has ever been received at the Adjutant-General's office. Your proportion of the new staff has been given to you. Captain Adams has been appointed Assistant Adjutant-General, and Mr. Bartlett, Deputy Quartermaster-General of your division. The Brigadiers McArthur and Cass are employed in superintending the recruiting service. A letter from the latter, gives reason to believe that this will go on well in the State of Ohio.

"I am &c.

(Signed) "JOHN ARMSTRONG."

"MAJOR-GENERAL HARRISON,

"*Com. 8th Mil. Dist. U. S.*"

Letter to Governor Meigs, of Ohio.

(*Private.*)

"*War Department, March 28th*, 1813.

"SIR,—I have this moment been informed by a Senator from Ohio, that the plan of campaign presented to General Harrison, has not been fortunate enough to meet the approbation of that officer; and that there is reason to fear that the objections made to it on his part (which it appears he has taken no pains to conceal) are likely to make an unfavorable impression on public opinion.

"Under these circumstances, I have believed it to be my duty to exhibit to your Excellency a brief view of the objections, fiscal and military, to the *land march*, which the General prefers; and on the other hand, to state the grounds on which the approach to Malden is directed to be made by water, and under convoy of the fleet.

"1st. The great expensiveness of a land movement.

The cost to the public (according to a statement made in December last by the General) for '*transportation alone*,' during the six weeks required for a land march to Malden, would of itself be sufficient to build and equip a naval force on Lake Erie, which would give us a decided and permanent command of that Lake.

"2d. The increased number of the army, which according to another statement of the General, will be indispensable, from the altered character of the western militia; composed as it will now be of men greatly inferior to the gallant bands of the last campaign, and with regard to whom, *numbers alone must compensate for the want of spirit and patriotism.*

"3d. The bad policy of any plan which, like that proposed by the General, leaves your enemy to choose the time and place of the attack, and with these, the power of compelling you to hazard a battle, upon plans and dispositions of his making.

"4th. The farther and incalculable advantage, of availing himself to the utmost of the Indian hordes attached to him—who, on a long march of six weeks, through swamps, forests, and thickets, will find a battle-ground in every mile, peculiarly adapted to their arms, powers, and habits—a circumstance which renders them more formidable than double the number of British grenadiers would be, on the same ground.

"On the other hand, if we turn to the new plan, none of these objections against it will be found. It makes necessary no augmentation of force, nor increase of expenditure. It carries you directly to your object, in full health and spirits—unimpaired by battle, hunger, or fatigue. It avoids all the waste and embarrassment of land transportation,

and what, on military principles, will alone decide the question of preference between the two modes of proceeding, it instantly and completely neutralizes the whole Indian force, (now noted by the General at four or five thousand combatants,) and leaves the battle to be fought on the part of the enemy, by British regulars and Canadian militia.

"Your Excellency will best know how, and to whom to communicate these views.

"I am &c.

"JOHN ARMSTRONG."

[No. 24.]

Narrative of the Expedition from Fort George to the Beaver Dams, U. C.

"On June 23d, 1813, *soi disant* Major Chapin called at the tent of Lieutenant-Colonel Bœrstler, on the plains of Newark; talked largely about having scoured all the country with his forty followers; that he had been to the Beaver Dams; that the enemy had fortified Decoo's stone house; that there were one company of regulars, and from sixty to one hundred Indians at that post. That if this stronghold was destroyed, the enemy could no longer show himself in this quarter; that five hundred men with a couple of field-pieces could effect this, &c. &c.

"Lieutenant-Colonel Bœrstler knowing this man to be a vain boasting liar, and suspecting his fidelity, from various circumstances, amongst which was that of having

joined a committee to remonstrate against the war, and that of coming forward as spokesman, in favor of a man charged by many of his neighbors with giving intelligence to the enemy—he was heard by Lieutenant-Colonel Bœrstler with indifference, and dismissed with coolness. A messenger now arrived to inform Lieutenant-Colonel Bœrstler that General Boyd desired to see him at his quarters. When arrived, he was asked, 'have you seen Major Chapin?'

"'Yes, sir.'

"'Has he mentioned any thing of an expedition?' He talked (as above related.)

"'It is intended to send five hundred men and two field-pieces to capture or dislodge the enemy, and batter down Decoo's house; and you are to have the command.'

"'Very well, sir; when do I march?'

"'This evening; you will call at the Adjutant-General's office for your orders.'

"He called, and the Adjutant-General having commenced to explain the object of the expedition, he was interrupted with 'You are a soldier, and will excuse me when I demand my orders in writing.'

"'Certainly, sir.'

"They were written, and Lieutenant-Colonel Bœrstler marched, about dark, with five hundred men, consisting of Captain McDowell's company of light-artillery, with a twelve and six pounder, twenty dragoons under Cornet Burd, Major Chapin's thirty-eight or forty mounted militia, and the rest composed of infantry of the fourteenth, sixth, and twenty-third regiments. The riflemen ordered to join this expedition, (and which were all-important,) were, by Lieutenant-Colonel Milton, the commander of the second

Brigade, contrary to all rule, placed on guard, and could not be relieved.

"The detachment arrived at Queenstown about eleven o'clock P. M., in great silence. Patrols and pickets were immediately sent out to prevent citizens from escaping to give intelligence; no candles were suffered to be lighted, and officers and men laid down on their arms. After day-break, the detachment proceeded, and near St. David's an Indian scout was killed by a flanker, while another made his escape. At St. David's the commander discovered that Major Chapin's knowledge of the roads was not to be relied on. He accordingly interrogated various inhabitants, and proceeded several miles, when arriving at a cross-road, he demanded of some of Major Chapin's men where that road led to? They replied, they did not know. 'How, not know! were you not here two days ago?' 'No, sir; not within several miles as far.'

"The commander now perceived that the General had been inveigled to risk this detachment on doubtful intelligence.

"Two British officers were discovered at some distance reconnoitring, and presently bugles and musketry conveyed the alarm in the direction of St. Catharine's. The commander viewed the ground, and observed, 'Gentlemen, here we must fight on our return.' The detachment proceeded until within a mile and a half of Decoo's house, in the original order of march, that is, the mounted militia in front, the commanding officer at the head of the detachment from the fourteenth regiment—the artillery and wagons—Major Taylor at the head of the companies of the sixth and twenty-third regiments—the dragoons in the rear, and flankers out on the right and left from each com-

pany. Having passed the road from St. Catharine's, where it crosses the mountain-road, by which the detachment marched, a piece of woods on either side of the road, some fields ahead, the Indians fired a volley on the rear guard, and killed and wounded three or four men. The detachment was forced to the right, and in a moment the action became general. The wagons, artillery, horses, and dragoons were ordered to the rear, out of reach of the enemy's fire.

"Some of the *soi disant* Major Chapin's men now demanded, 'Where is our commander? What are we to do?' The commanding officer looked for him in vain, and replied, 'You have no commander but myself; turn into the ranks and fight with my men.' Some did so; others found it as convenient to join their commander in the hollow, alongside the wagons.

"The second in command, Major Taylor, was unhorsed the first fire, and afterwards fought on foot. The surgeon remained until his horse was twice wounded, when he was ordered to the wagons. Thus, the commanding officer alone was mounted, and consequently compelled to carry his own orders to every point where they became necessary. He received a shot through the thigh in the early part of the action, which he concealed, fearing a bad impression might be made on his troops.

"After the contest had continued some time, the commanding officer endeavored to make it decisive: for which purpose he left orders with Major Taylor to protect the artillery, &c.; and forming the fourteenth into single file, a company on each flank thrown back *en potence*, a charge at quick step was commenced through the woods, and part of the enemy driven across the field, where many

fell. The charge having been made obliquely to the right, in order to drive the enemy into the cleared ground—this was no sooner effected, than a furious attack commenced on our left. The charge was now continued obliquely to the left, and the enemy driven to a considerable distance; not, however, without keeping up a constant fire on us, which from the thickness of the woods, and mode of fighting, where every combatant is his own commander, was perfectly in his power. Finding, in short, that musketeers unaccustomed to fighting in any other than a regular order, could not maintain so unequal a contest without great loss, a party of skirmishers were ordered, and the troops retreated by filing to the rear, from the right of companies. After reaching again the small field, the line was again formed behind the fence, (the enemy having advanced as we retreated,) and the contest kept up until twenty-six rounds were expended.

"The commanding officer now dashed into the rear, and found Major Chapin and a parcel of his men around the wagons. 'For God's sake, Major, do something; you do not fight your men, then take them and furnish mine with ammunition, and carry off the wounded to the wagons, that I may not be compelled to take men for this purpose out of my ranks.'

"Major Chapin appeared shortly after this in the rear of the line, with a keg of cartridges on his horse; he called a soldier, handed it over and resumed his station in the *hollow*. This was the whole of his exertion, and the only time he appeared on the battle-ground during three hours; this is the man who, in an official document, was called 'the brave Major Chapin.' The commanding officer now directed men to be detached from each company to

carry off the wounded, and get a supply of cartridges; which being effected, (the contest still continuing) Captain McDowell was directed to limber his pieces, and proceed with the wagons, on which were loaded the wounded, under the escort of a company of infantry, to a position about a quarter of a mile to the right, and somewhat to the rear. The object of this movement was, if possible, to get round the piece of woods on our right occupied by the enemy, and so regain the main road, and commence a retreat, which secured the only resource to save the detachment.

"Having arrived on the ground spoken of, the troops were formed into close column; but from the killed, wounded and skulking, our number seemed much reduced. They had marched eleven miles that morning without refreshment; they had fought three hours, the weather very warm, and consequently the troops were much exhausted. The commanding officer thought of ordering them a ration of whiskey, but some Indians getting in our rear, and commencing a fire, there was not time; and the commanding officer informed his troops that as the enemy were seen constantly to cross the road on which we were then formed within long shot of them, his intention was to wait a little longer until the enemy's principal force had passed, then to rush on him with a desperate charge, and if possible to gain the main road and retreat. He encouraged his troops to be resolute; these were the only means in our power, as the enemy were constantly gathering strength, and we losing; added to that, the ammunition low, and but three cartridges of grape left for the field-pieces.

"At this juncture, Lieutenant Fitzgibbon arrived from

the enemy with a flag of truce; Captain McDowell was sent to receive him. Fitzgibbon stated that we were far outnumbered; that we could not possibly escape, and that they had a number of Indians from the north-west, by no means as easily controled as those from the vicinity, and having suffered very severely, they were outrageous, and would commence a general massacre; he was, therefore, desirous to save the effusion of blood, and demanded a surrender. He was told, that we knew how to die, and they should hear from us in a few minutes. He returned very shortly, repeating the summons, and added, that if we did not believe we were outnumbered, and could not possibly escape, an officer would be permitted to view their troops. Lieutenant Godwin was sent, and arriving at the head of the lane where a part of their force was stationed, Colonel De Herrn ordered him back, saying, this was too humiliating to be permitted. On his return, the commanding officer asked those under his command, what was to be done? The second in command observed, he was willing to do any thing, (in other words, to give no opinion.) The commanding officer said, he did not ask the opinion of his officers, or wish them to bear any share of the blame that might attach; he was commanding officer, and, therefore, would take all the responsibility; he only wished to know their view of our situation. Some of them observed, they did not think it possible, with such a force around us, the exhausted state of our men, and seventeen miles to retreat, the road running principally through woods, that one fourth of us could escape death. As we must retreat in regular order along the road, while the immense number of Indians would constantly hang on our flanks and rear, and shoot us down at pleasure, without

our being enabled to injure them, more especially when our few remaining cartridges should be expended. This coinciding with the opinion of the commanding officer, Captain McDowell was directed to obtain the best terms he could, which consisted in permitting the officers to retain their side-arms and horses, the militia to return home on parole, and the detachment to surrender prisoners of war.

"Thus terminated one of the most unfortunate and impolitic expeditions that ever was planned. Five hundred men were risked 'to batter down with a twelve and six-pounder, Decoo's stone house, said to be fortified and garrisoned with a company of regulars and sixty to one hundred Indians, to capture or dislodge the enemy, and return by the way of St. David's and Queenstown.'

"This intelligence was derived from a source decided not entitled to confidence, having long previous to this been known by many for an unblushing liar; besides, he had not been within several miles of the post to be attacked, of the strength of which he undertook to give a particular detail. The situation and force of the enemy was this: Lieutenant Fitzgibbon was stationed with a company of regulars at Decoo's house. Captain William I. Kerr, whose official account is within reach, states that he had four hundred and fifty warriors in the action; Colonel Bishop stated their number at four hundred and eighty, that number having drawn rations at this post the evening before the engagement. Lieutenant-Colonel De Herrn, with three companies of regulars, some Indians and militia, was stationed at St. Catharine's, that is, six miles in the rear of the battle-ground, and ten miles from fort George, with a road leading into the mountain-road at the piece of woods

spoken of, and the right of the scene of action, by which road his forces joined the Indians. Colonel Clarke gathered all the militia he could, amongst which were a small company of dragoons. Colonel Bishop, commanding the whole British advance, was stationed near Twenty-mile Creek, that is, seven miles from the Beaver Dams, with a road intersecting the mountain-road, by which we marched, somewhat in the rear of the battle-ground, whither he marched during the action from four to five hundred regulars to cut off our retreat. They took their stations about the time we capitulated. They were not in the action, neither did the commanding officer know of their being there until after the surrender. General Vincent, with the remainder of his forces, was stationed nearer the scene of action than it was thence to fort George, and, unfortunately, many of his troops were advancing, so as gradually to narrow our possessions around fort George before they knew of our approach. Thus it is evident, that if this detachment had possessed ammunition enough to continue the fight another hour, it would have had almost the whole of the British army to contend with.

"As to the policy of this measure—a detachment of five hundred men, with a twelve and six pounder, is ordered to proceed via Queenstown, eleven miles nearer the enemy than to their own main body, to batter down a strong thick-walled two-story house, and to capture or dislodge *a company of regulars*, (for it could never be supposed that the Indians would coop themselves up in a house when they had woods before them.) No other detachment is ordered to support the preceding one, and three thousand or three thousand five hundred men remain quietly shut up in fort George! Yet that it was

thought *dangerous* to go too near the enemy is fully proved thus: the thirteenth regiment, one of the best in that army, and nearly or quite of equal strength with this detachment, had been stationed at Queenstown for a few days, but was ordered in, two days previous to the marching of the detachment, by express, fearing it might be cut off; and as it was as near to the Beaver Dams via St. Catharine's, as via Queenstown, why was not this detachment ordered to capture or dislodge the enemy's nearest post? (for that it was known that the enemy had a force of at *least* two hundred men at St. Catharine's will not be denied,) and this effected, the detachment could proceed to Decoo's, or finding the enemy too strong, a retreat was secure; or if it was thought absolutely necessary, for which, however, there appears no strong reasons, that this detachment should march by the mountain-road, why was not a simultaneous movement made by another force to keep De Herrn busy where he was, instead of leaving him undisturbed and at liberty to direct his force where he pleased.

"An account has been published of this affair, in which it is stated, 'why it should have been deemed proper to remain several hours in a position surrounded with woods, without either risking a decisive action, or effecting a retreat, remains to be accounted for, as well as the *project* of waiting for a re-enforcement from a distance of fifteen or sixteen miles.' It can be answered that the closeness of the country, and the force of the enemy, prevented the action being made decisive, and in like manner, the retreat, as detailed above. And as to re-enforcements, the commanding officer sent for none, neither is it thought that he ever did an act that would justify so mean an

opinion of his understanding as this project would seem to imply—knowing the distance he had been sent from any point whence support could be expected.

"And it is certainly matter of surprise, and worthy of consideration, that an official statement, founded on the *ipse dixit* of a runaway militia-man, should be published, and that the official letter of the commanding officer of the detachment, although limited, having to pass through the hands of the enemy, sent the next day by a flag of truce, should never have been published, nor even communicated to the War Department, and a copy of which has recently been obtained, although it was not *remembered* ever to have been received.

"It may be added, that the commanding officer of the detachment, having shortly previous to this period been twice illy treated as to commands,* was not asked how he

* Previous to the capture of fort George, Major-General Lewis called on Lieutenant-Colonel Bœrstler and observed, "I am requested to recommend a Lieutenant-Colonel to lead the advance in the attack on fort George. Will you serve?" "With great pleasure." "Very well." Three days after, Lieutenant-Colonel Bœrstler saw Lieutenant-Colonel Scott, at the head of the advance. From motives of delicacy, Lieutenant-Colonel Bœrstler never spoke to Major-General Lewis on the subject, feeling well convinced that the cause of this very mortifying circumstance, must be sought for *elsewhere*.

About the 18th or 19th of June, Brigadier-General Boyd sent for Lieutenant-Colonel Bœrstler, saying, "It is intended to send a regiment to Queenstown to cover that part of the country, and I have made choice of yours." "Very well, sir." At this moment Colonel Chrystie entered the room and called General Boyd into another apartment. When he returned, Lieutenant-Colonel Bœrstler asked, "When shall I march?" General Boyd replied, "Colonel Chrystie means to go himself." "Colonel Chrystie means to go himself!!! does he command the army, or do you, that he can go or stay when he pleases? (no answer) or if he is to go, why was I sent for? was it to wound my feelings, or insult me?" "You are warm, sir." "Yes sir, it is time that the officers of the line stick out for their rights; this is twice that commands have been voluntarily offered me, and twice I have been tricked." "Take care how you talk, sir." "I know what I say, General, and

liked this expedition, otherwise he would have decidedly opposed it, although on other occasions he always volunteered his services. But he had his written orders, enough for him. These orders were torn to pieces before the surrender, to prevent possibly, the ridicule of the enemy from attaching to our plans. A copy of these orders has been written for very often, but not yet obtained."

[No. 25.]

"*War Department, Wilna, October* 30*th*, 1813.

"SIR,—I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your letters of the 5th and 24th instant.

"The despatch by Captain Brown, and which, with him, was lost in Lake Erie, suggested, as an ulterior movement, the coming down to the Niagara river, and putting yourself on the right and rear of De Rottenburg's position before fort George; while General McClure, with his brigade of militia, volunteers, and Indians, should approach it in front. The enemy seems to have been aware of this, or some similar movement, as he began his retreat on the 9th, and did not stop until he had gained the head of Burlington Bay, where I understand, by report, he yet is. This is his last strong hold in the peninsula; routed from this he must surrender, or make his way down Lake

am ready to take the consequences; good morning, sir." Colonel Chrystie's regiment marched, and was recalled as already stated.

C. G. BŒRSTLER,

May 25*th*, 1814. *Col.* 14*th U. S. Infantry.*

Ontario to Kingston. His force is estimated at twelve or fifteen hundred effectives, the capture or destruction of which would be a glorious *finale* to your campaign. Our operations in this quarter are but *beginning* at a time when they ought to have been ended.

"I am, &c.,

"JOHN ARMSTRONG."

"MAJOR-GENERAL HARRISON."

"*Boonville, Nov. 3d*, 1813.

"When I wrote to you from Wilna it was doubtful whether our attack would be made directly upon Kingston or upon Montreal. Reasons exist for preferring the latter, and have probably determined General Wilkinson to go down the St. Lawrence. In this case the enemy will have at Kingston, besides his fleet, a garrison of twelve or fourteen hundred men; had we not a corps in the neighborhood, these might do mischief, and even render insecure the winter station of our fleet. To prevent this, it is deemed advisable to draw together at Sacket's Harbor a considerable military force. There are now at that post between four and five hundred men of all descriptions, sick, convalescent, and effective; Colonel Scott's detachment (about seven hundred) are on their march thither, and it is barely possible that Colonel Randolph's (not arriving in time to move with the army) may be there also; this does not exceed three hundred and fifty. McArthur's brigade added to these will make a force wholly competent to our object. This new disposition will render necessary the employment of so many of the militia and volunteers, now in service under General

McClure, as you may deem competent to the safe-keeping of forts George and Niagara and their dependencies.

"I am, &c.,

"JOHN ARMSTRONG."

"MAJOR-GENERAL HARRISON."

"*Head-Quarters, Newark, Nov. 16th*, 1813.

"SIR,—Commodore Chauncey with the fleet arrived here yesterday morning, and informed me that he was ready to receive the troops to convey them down the Lake; and that the season was so far advanced, rendering the navigation dangerous to the smaller vessels, that it was desirable they should be embarked as expeditiously as possible. *As a very small part of the militia and volunteers had arrived, and the situation of Sacket's Harbor appearing to me to require immediate re-enforcement, I did not think proper to take upon myself the responsibility of postponing the departure of the troops for the lower part of the Lake*, conformably to the directions contained in your letter of the 3d instant.

"The information I received yesterday from two respectable citizens who were taken near fort Meigs in June last, and who made their escape in an open boat from Burlington, confirms me in the propriety of sending them off. These men state that the *troops were hurrying to Kingston from York as fast as possible;* the regulars going down in boats, and the militia bringing the latter back.

"I am, &c.,

"WILLIAM HENRY HARRISON."

"HON. JOHN ARMSTRONG, *Secretary of War.*"

ERRATA.

Page 13. second line from the bottom, dele *a* and substitute *e* in the word dependencies.

Page 17, dele *British*, fifth line from the top.

Page 50, fourth line from the bottom, dele *the command of lake Erie.*

Page 55, eleventh line from the bottom, for *laid* read *lay.*

Page 78, tenth line from the top, dele *as* between the words *Indians* and *hideous.*

Page 133, first note, instead of *New-York*, read *York.*

Page 140, fifth line from the top, read *numerical* instead of *nominal.*

NOTICES

OF

THE WAR OF 1812.

BY JOHN ARMSTRONG,
LATE A MAJOR-GENERAL IN THE ARMY OF THE UNITED STATES,
AND SECRETARY OF WAR.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

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NOTICES OF THE WAR OF 1812.

CHAPTER I.

Plan of campaign.—Hampton's movements from Cumberland Head.—Junction of the two divisions (commanded by Lewis and Boyd) at Sackett's Harbor.—Direct attack on Kingston abandoned.—Descent of the St. Lawrence.—Combat at Chrystler's farm.—Hamptons refusal to join the main army at St. Regis.—Expedition discontinued.—Occurrences on the Niagara.

THE depressed condition, moral and physical, of the division of the left; the undecided state of naval ascendency on Lake Ontario; the reported augmentation of British troops on the peninsula,[1] and the comparative unimportance of even a successful campaign on that theatre, made new combinations necessary. Of the measures adopted, the principal were—the speedy concentration of a force at Sackett's Harbor, which in the present divided state of the enemy's strength would be competent to the reduction of

[1] To produce this augmentation on the peninsula, and thus diminish the British force at Kingston and Montreal, Boyd, who succeeded Dearborn, was restricted to defensive measures only—a policy which, at the time of Wilkinson's arrival at Fort George, had brought together for the attack of that post, a British force, estimated at three thousand five hundred men.

Kingston; while, contemporaneously with this movement, the division of the right should approach Montreal, for the purpose of demonstration or attack, as circumstances might render proper.[1]

In prosecution of these views, Hampton, who had been assigned to the command of the detached column, was first in motion. Leaving Colonel Clarke with a brigade of Vermont militia, to draw Prevost's attention to the avenues of attack furnished by Misisqui bay, he, on the 19th of September, began a march from Cumberland Head, with "four thousand effective infantry, and a well-appointed train of artillery."[2] The road taken on this occasion was the direct one, leading through the villages of Chazy, Champlain, and Odel-town—the last mentioned of which he reached on the twenty-first; when, after having driven from it a small British advanced guard, the General discovered that his farther progress on this route was obstructed by a scarcity of water, amounting nearly to a total want. For this evil there was but one remedy—a retrograde movement to Chazy, and the adoption, at that point, of the western or Chateaugay route to the St. Lawrence. Receiving, while on his march, letters from the Secretary of War stating the unexpected detention of the division of the left at Fort George, and the necessity this created for

[1] Appendix No. 1.

[2] "Four thousand effective infantry and a well appointed train of artillery, ought to inspire you with some reliance upon our army, new as it is."—*Hampton's letter to the Secretary of War of the 12th October.*

moderating his movements, he halted at the Four Corners, where he remained till the 21st of October.[1]

Having, during this month of comparative inaction, satisfied himself, that Prevost's disposable force did not exceed two thousand combatants—fifteen hundred of whom were Canadian militia, broken into detachments, and serving at points too remote from each other, for mutual support, he now determined to press forward, capture or drive before him all advanced parties found in his way, and arriving at Coghnawaga, take such chances as might offer, of making himself master of Montreal, without seeking the aid or waiting the coming of the main army.[2]

Resuming his march accordingly, on the 21st, he, on the evening of the 22d, had accomplished twenty-four miles of the forty, which separated him from his object; gained an unobstructed road and open country, for six additional miles in his front, and placed himself within striking distance of Prevost's first line of defence, with little if any annoyance from the enemy—circumstances having no tendency to abate the feverish temperament which now impelled him forward.

The 23d and 24th having been employed in bringing up his artillery and baggage, and in improving the communications between himself and his base—he, on the 25th, despatched Colonel Purdy and the first brigade, to the southern side of the Chateaugay, with orders "to gain a ford eight miles below; there to recross the river in the night, and at daybreak of the

[1] Appendix, No. 2. [2] Appendix, No. 3.

26th, to precipitate himself on the rear of the British position; while Izzard and the second brigade, under the General's own supervision, should assail it in front."

The better to accomplish the last part of this project, Izzard was early in motion on the 26th, and advancing along the northern bank of the river, reached a point at which he halted till the sound of Purdy's muskets should authorise the use of his own. Instead, however, of receiving this signal at daybreak, as was intended, it was not till two o'clock P. M. that any firing on the part of that officer was heard; and what then took place was in a direction, clearly indicating that he was yet distant from the ford, to which he was destined. Still, as the General's opinion was unshaken—"that the attack would soon be made, and when made, could not fail to be successful," the column immediately advanced; drove before it two pickets in succession, and was soon and successfully engaged with De Salaberry, the British commanding officer; who, after a short trial of strength, finding himself greatly overmatched and being apprehensive that without a prompt interposition of some kind, his defences would be either stormed or turned, resorted to a *ruse*, which for simplicity and effect, has never been surpassed since the siege of Jericho. Posting his buglers on different points of his scanty and covered line, they were ordered to sound loud and successive charges, which (as was intended) being mistaken by Hampton for proofs of the enemy's increased strength, and intention of renewing

the combat,[1] an immediate retreat was ordered and executed—carrying with it the poor but vaunted solace, that "no pursuit was made by the enemy."

Little flattering as these circumstances were to the second brigade, those attending the movement of the first, were still less so. Misled by his guides and retarded by the darkness of the night, and the thickets and swamps he had to encounter, it was sunrise before Purdy got over six of the eight miles he had to march; when, falling in with an outpost of the enemy, he was drawn into a skirmish, and soon after into an ambuscade; the effects of which were completely fatal to all the objects of the detachment—breaking down alike the order and spirit of the corps, and making its immediate retreat necessary. Nor had the enemy, on this occasion, the courtesy to erect golden or other bridges to facilitate its escape; he, on the contrary, harassed it incessantly by night and by day, allowing it neither rest nor refreshment till the 27th, when, without the smallest attempt on the part of Hampton to cover the movement, Purdy succeeded in recrossing the river and joining the second brigade.

Thus ended the General's ill-judged project of capturing Montreal by means exclusively his own; and here, it may be safely presumed, began his criminal purpose of defeating any attempt made by another to effect an object which he had himself failed to accomplish. Calling to his aid a council of war, he found no difficulty in obtaining a unanimous opinion, that

[1] Christy's War in the Canadas, p. 145-6.

"to preserve the army and fulfil the views of the government, it was necessary that the former should immediately return to such position as would best secure its communications with the United States, and either retire into winter-quarters, or be ready to strike below." In conformity with this opinion, the division was brought back to the Four Corners; where, on the 7th of November, it received an order to join the main army at St. Regis—to fulfil which, the General literally turned his back on the war, and retired to Plattsburg!

While the division of the right was making these displays of ill-directed and unprofitable labor, those of the centre and left, were held in a state of absolute inaction by the tardy movements of General Wilkinson; who, though ordered to the north as early as the 10th of March, did not reach Fort George 'till the 4th of September. Nor was the moment of this occurence, though later than was desirable, altogether unpropitious—the weather was yet moderate, the navigation of the lake without peril, the mass of the enemy's regular force investing Fort George, his fleet absent from Kingston, and the garrison of that post reduced to eight hundred effectives.[1] Unfortunately, the importance of prompt movements so distinctly indica-

[1] "I am this moment informed by J, just from Kingston, that the only regular troops now there, are six companies of De Waterville's regiment with a few artillerists—and at Prescott, two companies of the same regiment. The additional force, at both places, is made up of embodied militia, worse than our own."—*General Brown's letter to the War Department of the 28th of September.*

ted by these circumstances, and the advanced state of the season was either not seen, or not sufficiently appreciated by the commanding General; who, under pretences of a character not unequivocal[1] incurred a delay, which, besides involving the expedition in all the embarrassments of a Canadian winter, gave time to De Rottenburgh to reinforce Kingston; and to Yeo and the fleet to regain their covering and covered position under the batteries of the town. Having thus lost all hope of carrying, by direct attack, the first object prescribed by his orders, he was compelled to adopt the second—descend the St. Lawrence and in co-operation with Hampton, strike at Montreal. The condition of the weather at the time chosen for beginning this movement, the delays and losses sustained in its progress, and the abortive character of its end, will be sufficiently seen in the subjoined details, given by the General in his official report.[2]

"October 21st. Boisterous weather, left the Harbor and arrived at Grenadier Island.

"22d. Called for a return of the troops, found a large body yet in the rear, wrecked or stranded. Returned in quest of them and to order supplies of winter cloth-

[1] The pretences referred to were, the *absence of the fleet, the disordered condition of the boats and troops* arrived at Henderson's bay, and the defective arrangements made at Sackett's Harbor. Of these, the *first* and *second* were produced by acts of his own. In contradiction to the *third*, General Lewis, in giving his testimony on Wilkinson's trial, says—"On the 4th of October, *all at the harbor. was prepared for embarkation.*" See page 117 vol. 3d of Wilkinson's Memoirs.

[2] Appendix No. 4.

ing and shoes for the troops, who were nearly destitute. Observed at night on our way up, many fires on different points of the coast. Wind so high that I could not call at them.

"24th. The extent of the injury to our craft, clothing, arms and provisions, greatly exceeded our apprehensions; and has subjected us to the necessity of furnishing clothing, and of making repairs and equipments to the flotilla generally. In fact, all our hopes have been nearly blasted; but thanks to the same Providence that placed us in jeopardy we are surmounting our difficulties, and God willing, I shall pass Prescott on the night of the 1st or 2d proximo.

"25th. The General landed, and measures were taken to seize every pause of the prevailing storm to slip the flotilla into the St. Lawrence, with small detachments. But in these momentary and deceitful calms, we found it impossible to traverse with safety, the arm of the lake to Gravelly point, though distant only nine miles. In the several attempts made, many boats were driven ashore, and much provision and clothing lost. French Creek, nearly opposite the point where the enemy expected we should land, to attack Kingston, was made the general rendezvous of the troops and General Brown ordered to take command.

"November 2d. Commodore Chauncey, by concert,[1]

[1] This *concert* should have been entered into sooner: as things were managed, the Commodore arrived too late, for the purpose of either covering the detachment from attack, or punishing the enemy for making it. General Brown, in a note to the Secretary of War, dated at French Creek, says—"my passage from the island to this

entered the St. Lawrence, fell down nearly to French Creek, and took a position to command the north and south channels. On the 1st of November, the enemy discovered, even amid the storm, our movement and position at French Creek; attacked the detachment under General Brown, about sunset, with a squadron of two brigs, two schooners, and many boats, laden with infantry for landing, should the cannonade make a sufficient impression. Captain McPherson, of the light artillery, very soon erected a battery of three 18 pounders, and returned their fire with such spirit and effect, that they fell down to a harbor beyond the range of his shot. Next morning the attack was renewed and repelled, and one of the brigs with great difficulty towed off by the squadron, which put into Kingston channel behind Grand Island.

"Nov. 3d. The rear of the army with the General more and more sick, sailed from Grenadier Island for the general rendezvous; where the chief part arrived in the evening. The General was carried on shore and lodged in a tent, his malady increasing in violence.

"4th. This day was devoted to final arrangements for the sailing of the flotilla. Weather moderating.

"5th. The flotilla got under way, and without accident fell down the river and landed early in the night below Morrisville. The General, suspecting he would be followed by the enemy, (as in the morning his course

place, was rough enough—but fortunate on the whole. Had we been attacked on the water, the whole of my command would probably have been lost.

had been discovered by three of their look-out boats,) and knowing that two of their armed schooners could jeopard his movement, gave orders for his flotilla to pass Prescott (then seven miles below) in the course of the night. But some confusion occurred from the novelty of the movement, and the order was countermanded.

"6th. This morning the health of the General appeared better; he ordered the flotilla to descend to a point within three miles of Prescott; and the day being fine, got into his gig and proceeded to reconnoitre the place. In the meantime the powder and fixed ammunition were debarked and placed in carts; to be transported by land, under cover of the night, beyond the enemy's batteries. As soon as the General returned, orders were issued for the debarkation of every man, (except so many as were necessary to navigate the boats,) who were directed to march to a bay ten miles below Prescott. Arrangements were made at the same time for the passage of the flotilla by that place; the superintendence of which devolved on Brigadier-General Brown as officer of the day. About eight o'clock P. M. we had so heavy a fog, that it was believed we could pass the British fortress unobserved, and orders were accordingly given for the army to march, and the flotilla to get under way. The General in his gig proceeded ahead, followed by his passage-boat and family; but a sudden change of the atmosphere exposed the latter to the enemy's garrison, and near fifty 24 pound shot were fired at her, without effect; while the column on land (discovered by the gleam of their

arms) were assailed with shot and shells, without injury. General Brown on hearing the firing, judiciously halted the flotilla until the moon had set; when it got in motion, but was perceived by the enemy, who opened upon it, and continued their fire from front to rear, for the space of three hours; and yet *out of more than three hundred boats, not one was touched;* and only one man was killed and two wounded. Before ten o'clock the next morning, the whole of the flotilla (except two vessels) reached the place of rendezvous. About noon this day, Colonel King, Adjutant-General of the army of General Hampton, arrived and waited on the Commander-in-chief; whom he informed that he had been to Sackett's Harbor with a despatch from General Hampton to the Secretary of War; that he had no communication, written or verbal, from General Hampton to him, (the Commander-in-chief) but that not finding the Secretary at Sackett's Harbor, he had thought proper on his return, to call for any communication he (General Wilkinson) might have to make to General Hampton. The General had intended in the course of this day, to send an express to that officer, *with an order to form a junction of his division with the corps descending the St. Lawrence,* and availed himself of the opportunity presented by Colonel King, to send such order.

"7th. The General having been exposed to the open air all last night, in consequence found himself ill. In passing Prescott, two of our largest vessels, loaded with provisions, artillery and ordinance stores, either through cowardice or treachery, had been run into the

river near Ogdensburgh and opposite Prescott. The enemy kept up so constant a cannonade on them that we found it difficult, and lost half a day, in getting them out. We perceived the militia in arms at Johnstown, directly opposite to us, and several pieces of field artillery in motion. Understanding that the coast below was lined with posts of musketry and artillery at every narrow pass of the river, Colonel Macomb was detached, about one o'clock, with the elite, to remove these obstructions; and the General got under way about half past three. Four or five miles below, we entered the first rapids of the river; and soon after passing them, two pieces of light artillery (which had not been observed by Colonel Macomb) opened a sharp fire upon the General's passage-boat,[1] but without any further effect than cutting away some of the rigging. Lieutenant-Colonel Eustis, with a part of our light gun-barges, came within shot of the pieces of the enemy and a cannonade ensued, without injury to either side. In the meantime, Major Forsyth, (who was in the rear of the elite of Colonel Macomb,) landed his riflemen, advanced upon the enemy's guns, and had his fire drawn by a couple of videttes posted in his route; on which their pieces were precipitately carried off. The General came to at dusk, about six miles below the town of Hambleton; where he received a report from

[1] The General was accomodated with two boats—a *gig* occupied by himself; and a *passage-boat* of much larger size, carrying his servants and baggage, which by preceding him monopolized the fire of the enemy.

Colonel Macomb, who had routed a party from a block-house about two miles below, and captured an officer.

"8th. This morning the flotilla fell down to a contraction of the river at a point called the White House, where the dragoons were assembled to be crossed. Brigadier-General Brown was ordered this morning to reinforce Colonel Macomb with his brigade, and to take the command; and the whole day and following night, were devoted to transporting the dragoons. About noon this day, we received information that two armed schooners and a body of the enemy in batteaux, estimated at 1,000 or 1,500 men, had descended the river from Kingston, and landed at Prescott; that they had immediately sent a flag across the river to Ogdensburgh, and demanded the delivery of all public property there, under penalty of burning the town. Not long after, information was received that the enemy had reimbarked at Prescott, and were following us with seven gun-boats.

"9th. This morning very early, the enemy menaced our rear, and a slight skirmish took place between our riflemen and a party of their militia and Indians, in which we had one man killed, and the enemy were driven back. The cavalry, with four pieces of artillery, under the command of Captain McPherson, were attached to General Brown's command and he was ordered to march to clear the coast before us, as far as a point near the head of the Longue Saut. The rapidity of the current obliged us to halt the flotilla several hours, to enable General Brown to make good his march in time to cover our movement. During this period, the

enemy frequently threatened our rear, but never indicated an intention to make a serious attack. About 3 o'clock P. M. the flotilla got under way and came to about 5 o'clock at the Yellow house, (having floated near eleven miles in two hours,) where we encamped for the night.

"10th. This morning the following order was issued:"—

"*General Orders.*

"*Head-Quarters, Tuttle's Bay, Nov.* 10*th*, 1813.

"General Brown will prosecute his march with the troops yesterday under his command, excepting two pieces of artillery and the 2d dragoons; who, with all the well men of the other brigades, except a sufficient number to navigate the boats, are to march under the orders of Brigadier-General Boyd. This precaution is enjoined by regard to the safety of the men in passing the Longue Saut; and as this rapid is long and dangerous, the General earnestly requests the commanding officers of regiments and corps to examine the boats, and see them properly fitted, in order to avoid accidents as much as possible. Brigadier-General Boyd will take the necessary precautions to prevent the enemy who hangs on our rear, from making a successful attack; and if attacked is to turn and beat them. The boats are to resume the station assigned them in the original order respecting the flotilla; and for this, the commanding officers of regiments and brigades will be held responsible. The movement of yesterday was a reproach to the service. The flotilla will come to to-day at Barnhartz near Crab Island; and two

guns from the front will be the signal for landing. In case of an *attack in force beyond all expectation*, the corps under Brigadier-Generals Boyd and Brown are to co-operate with each other promptly and with decision. The general officer of the day will strictly attend, and see that the flotilla puts off and moves in the prescribed order; and will arrest any officer who presumes to deviate therefrom.

"Brigadier-General Brown marched, and about noon was engaged with a party of the enemy near a block-house on the Saut, erected to harass our flotilla in its descent. About the same time, the enemy were observed to be advancing on our rear; and their galley and gun-boats hove in sight, approached our flotilla (then on shore) and began to cannonade it. The slender structure of our gun-barges made it impossible for them to resist the long 24 pounder of the galley; this obliged the General to order two 18 pounders to be run on shore and placed in battery, a single discharge from which gave such alarm to the enemy's vessels that they retired up the river, accompanied by their troops. But these slight operations so far wasted the day, that our pilots were afraid to enter the Saut (a continued rapid of eight miles) with the flotilla; we therefore fell down within two or three miles of the head of it and came to for the night. By this time, the General had become so extremely ill as to be unable to sit up and was confined to his bed, in a small berth under the quarter deck of his passage-boat.

"11th. Having heard the firing of cannon yesterday (between General Brown and the enemy) and being

still unapprised of the result, it became necessary that we should hear from him before we committed ourselves to the Saut; which allows no retreat, no landing, no turning to the right or left. About 10 or 11 o'clock A. M. the Commander-in-chief received advice from General Brown, that "he had forced the enemy to retire before him, and had arrived near the foot of the Saut." Orders were immediately given for the flotilla to prepare to sail, and for General Boyd and his command to commence their march, when some firing took place from the gun-boats, and a report was brought to the Commander-in-chief that the enemy was advancing in column: on which he ordered General Boyd to attack them, and the flotilla not to leave the shore. But the report was soon after contradicted. A variety of reports respecting the enemy's movements were successively brought to the General, which impressed him with a conviction, that they had determined to attack his rear, as soon as the flotilla should put off and the troops commence their march; he resolved to anticipate them. He therefore sent Colonel Swift of the Engineers, with instructions to Brigadier-General Boyd, (who had been directed by the order of the preceding day to take command of the detachment on shore,) to form that detachment into three columns; to advance upon the enemy, to endeavour to outflank them and take their artillery.[1] Soon after this, the action com-

[1] Boyd, in his testimony given on Wilkinson's trial, says—my orders from General Wilkinson were—"should the enemy advance upon us, *beat them back*." An order merely *defensive*, and entirely fulfilled. See p. 91, Vol. 3d.—*Wilkinson's Memoirs*.

menced, and for the numbers engaged, was extremely warm and bloody, for upward of two hours; during which time, in open space and fair combat, the raw, undisciplined troops of the United States, braved and frequently drove the best soldiers of the British army. The fortunes of this day were various; sometimes one line, sometimes the other giving away. Unfortunately during the shiftings of the action (by the death of Lieutenant Smith, a young officer of the highest promise,) the enemy got possession of a field-piece; the only trophy they obtained. It is difficult to speak of the precise numbers engaged on either side, because the detachment under General Boyd consisted of an indefinite number of his own, Covington's and Swartwout's brigades, ordered from on board the boats to lighten them, and save the hazard of the men's lives, in descending the Saut.* Neither Covington, nor Swartwout were obliged to take part in the action with this detachment; yet they both entered the field, taking command of that part of the force which belonged to their respective brigades, where they exhibited the same courageous conduct which distinguished General Boyd; and to the great loss of the service, General Covington received a mortal wound, when encouraging and leading on his detachment. The numbers on our side, could not have exceeded sixteen or seventeen hundred men; while those of the enemy are reckoned by spectators, at from one to two thousand; but, 'tis probable, did not exceed fifteen hundred; consisting, as we are informed, of detachments of the 49th, 84th,

* Capt Meyers 13 Infy was in command on the boats guard & landed at this time with his men and joined his command, he was soon after shot through the shoulder and crippled for life, having

and 104th, with the Voltigeurs and Glengary regiment.[1]

"With respect to the courage displayed by our officers, it would be useless to enter into details, since they all manifested in their respective stations, equal intrepidity. The names of the meritorious dead and wounded, will be recorded in another place. The firing ceased by common consent, about 4 o'clock P. M; our troops were formed in front of the enemy, who were also in line, when they separated; the enemy to their camp, and we, to our boats. The troops being much exhausted, it was considered most convenient that they should embark, and that the dragoons, with the artillery should proceed by land. The embarkation took place without the smallest molestation from the enemy, and the flotilla made a harbor near the head of the Saut, on the opposite shore.

"Nov. 12th. The flotilla sailed early this morning, and passed down the Saut without discovering either boats or troops of the enemy, and arrived in the forenoon at Barnhartz; where the Commanding General received a *letter* from *Major-General Hampton*, by the hands of Colonel Atkinson his Inspector-General, which *blasted all his hopes and destroyed every prospect of the*

"The military part of the detachment from Kingston, consisted of a few artillerists with light pieces—the 49th and 89th British regiments, and two small parties of Voltigeurs under the command of Lieutenant-Colonel Morrison of the 89th, making together 800 combatants. The naval force directed by Captain Mulcaster, consisted of nine gun-boats and one galley. Of unarmed boats, and seamen, number not known."—*Result of General Brown's enquiries after the war.*

campaign. A council of war was called on the receipt of this communication, which was submitted to their consideration; whereupon, the council determined, that '*the conduct of Major-General Hampton, in refusing to join his division to the troops descending the St. Lawrence,* (*to carry an attack on Montreal*) *rendered it expedient to remove the army to French Mills on Salmon river.*' This determination was carried into effect on the 13th."

Relieved by this unexpected termination given to General Wilkinson's expedition, from all further apprehensions with regard to Montreal and Kingston, the British Commander-in-chief now hastened to place on the peninsula a force, that should be competent not only to the maintenance of the commanding positions he yet held at Stony Creek and Burlington heights, but to the defence of the district generally, against any new attempt at invasion. With these views, a corps of twelve hundred men, composed of a few artillerists, the Royal Scots, 49th and 100th regiments of the line, aided by a small provincial corps and two hundred Indians, were assigned to the service, and placed under the command of Lieutenant-General Drummond.

This officer believing that activity and boldness furnish in all cases the best means of repelling aggression, and never fail to be successful against an enemy unpractised in war and destitute of discipline, promptly assumed the *offensive;* and as a first step, pushed forward his elite (about four hundred combatants) as far as Twelve Mile Creek, in the direction of Fort George. Colonel Murray, the officer commanding this detach-

ment, falling in at that place with a reconnoitring party from the fort, killed one and captured four of their number; and so decidedly impressed the remainder with respect for his strength, that on their report, Brigadier McClure (a militia officer on whom the command had now unfortunately devolved) came at once to the conclusion—that the post, with the defence of which he was charged, "not being tenable against so formidable an enemy" must be quickly abandoned; the garrison removed to Fort Niagara, and the exposed part of the frontier protected, by destroying such Canadian villages in its front, as would best afford shelter to the enemy during the winter.[1]

This new and degrading system of defence, which by substituting the torch for the bayonet, furnished the enemy with both motive and justification for a war of barbarism, was carried into full execution on the 10th of December. On that day, Fort George was dismantled and abandoned; the garrison withdrawn to Fort Niagara; Newark reduced to ashes, and an order subsequently given to Colonel Graves, commanding a small corps of artillerists, to open a fire of hot shot on the neighbouring village of Queenstown.[2]

1 "This day a scouting party came in contact with the enemy's advance; lost four prisoners and one man killed. This movement determined me to call a council. All agreed that the fort was not tenable, when I, in consequence, gave orders for evacuating it."—*McClure's letter of the 10th December* 1813.

2 "The village of Newark is now in flames, and the enemy completely shut out of both hope and means of wintering near Fort George." And again "the enemy has appeared in considerable force on the opposite shore; but having deprived them of a shelter

These achievements accomplished, the Brigadier (now ensconced behind the walls of Fort Niagara) was indulging in a proud and flattering prospective of the wisdom and efficiency of his conservative system, when information reached him, that Murray instead of being turned from his purpose by the burning of Newark, had determined to winter in Fort Niagara; and had accordingly arrived at Fort George on the 12th, where he but awaited the coming of Drummond, with the remainder of the army and a supply of boats, to begin the enterprise.

Information like this, as may readily be supposed, wrought a sudden and entire change in the quality of the Brigadier's dream; reducing it—to the discovery of some plausible pretence for withdrawing himself from the perils of the approaching storm.[1] This was soon found "in the greater convenience furnished by Buffalo for calling out militia" when on the 16th, though believing that the fort would be attacked in a day or two, and though putting no faith in the fidelity of Leonard, to whom he committed its custody, he

there, they are marching to Queenstown. I have therefore directed Colonel Graves, with two pieces of artillery, to open a hot shot on Queenstown, and deprive them of quarters there also."—*McClure's letter of the 25th December.* See also Appendix No. 5.

[1] Nor was this all. Though informed of the enemy's intention, and of the *very night on which* the attack was to be made,—he neither hastens back to secure the only fortified post within his command, nor even takes the trouble of apprising the garrison of the danger that awaited it? How small is the difference, so far as the public interest is concerned, between conduct like this, and that which the General imputed to Leonard.

began his retreat westward. Unfortunately, these anticipations of danger, arising as well from the character of his successor, as the intentions of the enemy, were literally fulfilled.

Drummond, who had joined Murray on the 14th, reasoning from what he had seen of McClure's conduct, and from the reported habits and prejudices, personal and political, of Leonard, promptly assented to Murray's project of surprising Fort Niagara; and of making a general and desolating inroad, on the hamlets and villages of the American frontier. In prosecution of these objects, his whole disposable force was transferred, in the night of the 18th, to the American side of the river; when the elite under Murray, now increased to five hundred and fifty combatants, marched directly on the fort, cut off two picket guards in succession, seized two sentinels planted at and near the gate, obtained from these the countersign, and entered the fort, without giving the slightest alarm to the garrison.

Thus far, in a view strictly military, Murray's movement was well conducted, and merits applause; but the use subsequently made by that officer of his adversary's crime, or of his own good fortune, cannot fail to degrade him both as a man and a soldier; since, "what in either character, has been gained without loss or resistance, should be held without bloodshed." Yet of the sleeping, unalarmed, and unresisting garrison of Fort Niagara, sixty-five men were killed and fourteen wounded—more than two thirds of whom, were *hospital patients.*

The success of this part of the exercise being ascer-

tained, Rial, who with a column of seven hundred men (including two hundred Indians) held a covering position in the rear of the fort, proceeded to execute what remained of the plan; and it must be admitted, with little more of opposition from any quarter, than if the justice of the proceeding both as to character and extent, had been unquestionable. Beginning with the villages and intermediate houses on the bank of the river, all were sacked and burned from Youngstown to Buffalo, both included; and so universal was the panic produced by the invasion, that had it not been stayed by the voluntary retreat of the enemy, a large portion of the frontier would in a few days more have been left without a single inhabitant; so true it is, that "*fear betrays, like treason.*"[1]

Remarks. When in the progress of the war it was discovered, that the command of the army was a burthen, too heavy for General Dearborn to carry with advantage to the nation or credit to himself, two remedies were suggested—the one, a prompt and peremptory recall of the General from command; the other, such an augmentation of his Staff, as would secure to the army better instruction, and to himself, the chance of wiser counsels. Of these two modes of proceeding, the latter was preferred, and Generals Wilkinson and Hampton selected to fulfil its intentions. Before however this arrangement could be completed, the increased and increasing illness of Dearborn, made his removal indispensable; when, in right of *seniority*, Wilkinson be-

[1] Appendix No. 6.

came the head of the army; and Hampton, the commander of the division of the right, serving on detachment.

Having thus briefly suggested the views under which these veterans were brought to the north, we proceed to give a few additional details and a short critique, which besides enabling the reader to judge correctly of the causes which gave to the campaign its disastrous and disgraceful termination, will abundantly illustrate the opinion of the Great Frederick, that "Generals may, like Prince Eugene's jackass, have made twenty campaigns, without knowing any thing of tactics."

Pursuing the chronological order of the narrative, we begin with Major-General Hampton's blunders:—

1st. His march from Cumberland Head, was wrong in point of time; being a whole month earlier than Wilkinson's movement from Sackett's Harbor: to which by the plan of campaign, it was intended to be subsidiary, and nearly simultaneous.[1]

2d. The extent given to it, was injudicious; as every step taken beyond Chazy, made co-operation with the

[1] This error was hastened if not produced by a letter from Wilkinson of the 30th of August. The following is an extract from it. "The enemy having changed his system from defence to offence, is now assembling his whole disposable force at the head of the lake, to attack Fort George—thus placing himself at too great a distance from Montreal, to give seasonable succor to that city. He certainly presumes upon our imbecility; and we as certainly should take advantage of his presumption. *General Hampton should without delay cross Champlain*, and commence his movement towards St. Johns' *—taking the Isle aux Noix in his route or not, as circumstances may justify.*"

main army, more difficult; diminished the effect of the movement as a demonstration, and unnecessarily exposed the division to a separate attack.

3d. The object aimed at, (a position at Acadie) if attained, was not only unimportant to the purpose of the campaign, but positively mischievous; inasmuch, as it would have placed the division in what is technically called a cul de sac–the centre of a circle, the whole circumference of which, if not already occupied, could have been promptly seized by the enemy; whence it follows, that to have preserved a communication with his own base, the American General must have hazarded a battle with Prevost's whole disposable force.

Fortunately an unexpected scarcity of water, recalled the General to his senses; and supplying for the moment the want of professional judgement, put a full stop to his march on Acadie, and eventually, directed it on the Four Corners—a position, which for purposes of either demonstration or co-operation, was precisely that, which he ought to have taken at the opening of the campaign.

4th Of the General's plan of attack, we need hardly say, that it was in all its parts, in direct opposition to military maxims, and thus necessarily self-condemned to disaster and disgrace. The rules which justify this censure, are among those of the most distinguished masters of the art, Napoleon, Montecuculli, &c.

1. "It is against all sound principles, to divide your force into corps, between which there can be no communication, or such only, as may be hazardous or

difficult. This error is greatly aggravated, if committed while in the presence of an enemy, whose communications are easy and safe.

2. "When from any cause, a departure from the preceding rule becomes unavoidable, no action requiring *multiplied means* and *concerted movements*, should be given to the detached corps—it should have in itself, strength enough to effect the entire object."

3. "Never attack the front of a fortified position, if it be possible to turn it: a corollary from this maxim is, to turn that flank which (other things being equal) presents the fewest difficulties."

4. "Nothing can be more rash in itself, or contrary to rule, than to present a flank march to an enemy in position; and the more so, should he occupy heights, at the foot of which you must defile."

5. "Night marches, made by two or more corps, moving from different points and having a common rendezvous and object, generally fail from a want of punctuality in meeting; whence it follows as a rule, "never to employ them, but under circumstances the most favorable—faithful and intelligent guides to indicate the route; strong pioneer parties, to remove obstructions; and estimates, carefully made by practical men of the staff, on the retarding influences of weather, roads, and distances."

In addition to the faults thus noticed, and which may have arisen from want of knowledge or want of judgement, two others must be added which can in no way be palliated or justified—involving as they do, much professional error and great moral depravity.

Such was his abandonment of Purdy's column to its fate, without awaiting its arrival at a place of rendezvous, given by himself; and such also was his refusal to join the main army at St. Regis, when ordered to do so, by his commanding officer—a crime, not a little aggravated by the false pretences, under which he attempted to justify it.[1]

Wilkinson's errors, will not be found to be fewer in number, nor less grave in point of character, than Hampton's.

1st. "In one of the pauses made in his journey from the south, the General found time to instruct an officer of his own grade, but of later appointment, in the important duty of self preservation. "Remember," he said, "that a general officer does not expose his person, but in the last resort. Subordinates execute, while chiefs command; to mingle in the conflict, is to abandon the direction. Why are so few French Generals killed in their sanguinary battles? Because they know themselves to be master workmen, and how to direct their journeymen. While giving the general direction, they hold in reserve selected corps, to watch the tide of battle; always ready to improve an advantage or retrieve a misfortune."[2]

Such were the bases of our veteran's conservative system; which had they obtained the authority of established rules, would, at Lodi and Arcole, have placed Bonaparte behind a village or a swamp, till the battles fought at those places, had been either half won, or

[1] Appendix No. 7 [2] Wilkinson's Memoirs of his own times.

half lost. Let us test their truth by a few well-known facts, derived from modern history—French, British and American. Was it then we ask, by refusing to expose themselves to danger that Dubois was killed at Roveredo? Baruel and Quenain at Cassaria? Joubert at Novi? Caffarelli and Bon at Acre? Dessaix at Marengo? D'Espaigne at Aspern? St. Hilaire and Lannes at Esling? La Salle at Wagram? Bessieres at Rippach? Bruyeres at Rippenbach and Duroc at Lutzen? And again: was it by committing to subordinates and journeymen the front of the battle, that Abercrombie fell at Canope? Moore and Baird at Corunna? Crawford, McKinnon and Walker, at Ciudad, Roderigo? Kempt, Harvey, Bowes and Picton, at Badajoz? Brock, at Queenstown? Ross, at Baltimore? And Packenham, Gibbs and Keane, at New Orleans? Will a glance at our own chronicles lead to a different conclusion? Where fell Montgomery and Arnold, in the attack on Quebec? Where Mercer, in the combat at Princeton? Where Nash, in the Battle of Germantown? Where Wooster, in that of Danbury? Where De Kalb, in that of Camden? And where Wayne, at the storming of Stony Point? All, at the head of the corps they respectively commanded, and in the very front of the battle. Examples thus numerous and pointed, abundantly show, that the pretended rules on which Mr. Wilkinson would rest his life-preserving system, are not only unsupported, but expressly contradicted, by professional usage.

Nor, on examination, shall we find that the reason he employs to sustain them, is better entitled to respect,

than the rules themselves. For if it be true, as he asserts, that "*to mingle in the conflict, is to lose the faculty of commanding*", why interpose Generals in any stage of a battle, but to "make confusion worse confounded?" Will it be pretended, that a General who has lost the power of guiding a *first attack, by partaking in it*, will be competent to direct a *last resort*—which, as all know, besides ordinary difficulties and dangers, involves many of both, peculiar to itself? Again: if battles are not fought on principles as strictly mechanical as those of a puppet-show, how are subordinates to execute the orders of an absent chief, without interposing some act of authority peculiarly their own? And if not, by what magic or miracle, will they escape that moral cholera, which, on Mr. Wilkinson's theory, would be so fatal to all Generals, who should dare to mingle in a conflict? That there have been officers of high rank, whose self-possession has been greatly disturbed, if not wholly annihilated, in the presence of an enemy, can neither be denied nor dissembled; but to take for granted that the infirmity is universal, as Mr. Wilkinson does, is a palpable libel on military character and conduct; and not to be atoned for, by the condemnation it necessarily inflicts on the libeller himself.

Of the tactical sketch, which our veteran would impose on his pupil as a French order of battle, we may safely say—that it is a mere fiction; without either prototype or parallel. What! all the Generals of an army posted out of harm's way, and at the heads of selected corps, there to await one of two contingencies—

a victory already won, or a misfortune already incurred! To show how little this is conformed to French tactics, let it be contrasted with the *defensive* and *offensive* orders of battle, most practised and approved by the hero of a hundred fights. "For the *former*, the first of your two lines, should deploy; and the second, be formed in columns of attack by battalions. For the *latter*, two lines of battalions, each formed in column on its two central platoons, is to be preferred; the heads of the second line fronting the intervals of the first, and the openings between the columns, filled with artillery and marksmen. To give to this order its greatest impulsive action, each brigade must have its first and second line, and be so placed that every general officer may have his reserve at hand, without waiting to draw it from any other quarter."[1]

2d. When on the 5th of August, Mr. Wilkinson arrived at Washington, having by the removal of Dearborn, become Commander-in-chief of the northern army, the plan of campaign approved by the President, was communicated to him, with a request—that "if on ex-

[1] "Pour une battaille defensive en position, la premiere ligne déployée, et la seconde en colonne d'attaque par battalions, offrent l'ordre le plus parfait. Pour aller à l'attaque, je préferérais deux lignes de batallions en colonne d'attaque sur les pelotons du centre, en plaçant la seconde ligne en face des intervalles de la premiere. Les intervalles d'un batallion a l'autre seraient remplis par de l'artillerie ou des téraillcurs. Pour donner à l'action impulsive tout l'avantage possible, chaque brigade aura sa premiere et sa seconde ligne, pour que chaque officier general ait ses moyens de reserve à sa disposition, sans être obligé de les attendre d'ailleurs." Vie politique et militaire de Napoleon, Chap. XIV. Vol. 3. p. 223.

amination he found anything objectionable in its principle or details, he would freely suggest such modifications of either, as in his opinion might be necessary or useful." The result of this reference was not such as might have been expected from a soldier of forty years' service. Overlooking every military maxim applying to the case, and not paying more respect to the admonition furnished by the impotent, if not disgraceful conclusion of his predecessor's campaign; he adopted the great and leading error, into which that commander had fallen? Assuming as a fact, "the incompetency of the means given him for the reduction of Kingston, and that without a decided naval ascendancy on the lake, the measure would be impracticable"—"will it not be better," he said, "to strengthen our force already at Fort George; cut up the British in that quarter; destroy Indian establishments and (should General Harrison fail in his object) march a detachment and capture Malden. After which, closing our operations on the peninsula, razing all works there and leaving our settlements on the strait in tranquillity, descend like lightning with our whole force on Kingston, and having reduced that place and captured both garrison and shipping, go down the St. Lawrence and form a junction with Hampton's column, if the lateness of the season should permit."[1]

It will readily occur to the military reader, that the General's project stood self-condemned by its palpable inconsistency; for if, as he asserts, the disposable force

[1] Wilkinson's letter of the 6th August.

given him, while fresh and entire, unexhausted by fatigue and undiminished by sickness or battle, was incompetent to the capture of Kingston, what reasonable ground of hope existed, that this very force, after cutting up one enemy, beating and capturing another, breaking down Indian establishments and sweeping from the peninsula everything hostile, would after all be in condition not only to *reduce Kingston and capture both fleet and garrison ;* but, if the *weather permitted*, descend the St. Lawrence, effect a junction with Hampton, and *invest* or *attack Montreal ?* We need scarcely add, that this strategic labor of the General, had no tendency to increase the executive confidence in either his professional knowledge or judgement. Still the President hoped, that "if the opinions it contained, were *mildly rebuked*, the General would abandon them, and after joining the army, would hasten to execute the plan already communicated to him." Such however was not the course contemplated or pursued by Mr. Wilkinson. Errors, whether arising from want of judgement or want of principle, are seldom given up without a struggle. In the present case, so strong was the General's preference for "long and moderate wars" to those of short and audacious character, that soon after his arrival at Sackett's Harbor, he convened a council to whom he submitted the following questions :—[1]

1. "Shall we wait *in our present positions* a combat between the rival squadrons for a supremacy on the lake ? or,

[1] Appendix No. 8.

2. "Shall we assemble at Fort George a sufficient force—cut up the enemy in that quarter; then descend to this place [Sackett's Harbor] call the division from lake Champlain, incorporate the whole and make a direct attack on Kingston."

Of these projects, had No. 1 been adopted and the troops kept in "their present positions" until the question of naval ascendancy was settled by a decisive battle between the fleets, the whole army would have been condemned to a state of total inaction; not merely during the campaign, but during the war—as it is a well known fact, that neither squadron, on Lake Ontario, would fight on the invitation of its adversary; and (what is yet more remarkable) that the party having the temporary ascendancy, was never able so far to avail himself of it, as to compel his adversary to fight a *decisive battle.* Again: had plan No. 2 been preferred, the effect would have been to consummate Prevost's policy, in quieting all fear, on his part, as to the security of *Kingston* and *Montreal*—the two *vital points* in his line of defence. Fortunately the council to which these and other projects were submitted, unanimously rejected the General's favorites, and adopted No. 3 of the plans prescribed by the government.

3d. Having thus failed in his new attempt, he on the 2d of September, set out for Fort George; for the professed purpose of hastening the removal of the division of the left to Sackett's Harbor. It was not however till the 4th that he arrived at that post; nor until the 16th, that "with trembling hand and giddy

head" he was able to make an official communication to the Secretary of War. Of the subjects discussed in this letter, the plan of campaign was still uppermost. "From the best information," he says, "the enemy near us, have three thousand men on paper; of whom fourteen hundred are sick. Shall I make a sweep of them or not, to the hazard of our main object? *Not, unless that main object is jeoparded by the fate of our squadron. It would require an operation of three weeks.*" Two days after coming to this decision, he renews the subject under an evident change of opinion. "*Shall I,*" *he demands,* "*leave the enemy within four miles of this post, making a wide investment of it from Kingston to the Four Mile creek? or, shall I break him up? With our prospects, the decision is embarrassing—change them by an abandonment of the main object, and our course is direct, viz: to take possession of Burlington bay and cut up or capture the whole division in this quarter; which may be estimated at three thousand regular troops.*[1] I pray you to deliberate on

[1] At the moment of all this swaggering, the General was seldom out of his bed; and quite unable to mount a horse. Boyd's testimony as to the state of his powers mental and physical, from the time he joined the army till he had retreated from Canada, is given in the following words—"When the General arrived, he was so much indisposed in mind and body, that in any other service, he would perhaps have been superceded in command. His health continued in this state till witness left him at French Mills." Page 80, Vol. 3d Wilkinson's Memoirs. This statement of Boyd's is fully confirmed by the General's own representation which makes out a case of decided incompetency, throughout the campaign. *See his official letters and Diary.*

these points and give me your advice without delay."[1] This request was not refused, and the advice sought for, recommended "a prompt movement to Sackett's Harbor or Grenadier Island, and an attack on Kingston, while the weather was favorable and the garrison weak."

4th. In a despatch of the 27th of September the General says—"at eight o'clock last evening, I received your interesting letter of the 22d; and shall employ its authorizations to the best possible effect." Yet so little conformed was his conduct to his promises, that nothing recommended by the Secretary was done, and everything ordered by him, was evaded. Instead of giving to the flotilla, employed in carrying the troops, the destination of Sackett's Harbor, or of *Grenadier Island*, as he had stated, he selected Henderson's bay—a place having no military relation to the pending expedition, nor containing any depot of food, clothing, arms, or ammunition. Again: instead of requiring the aid of the fleet in quickening and covering the movement, he volunteered an advice to the naval commander, "*to remain at the head of the lake*, drive Yeo and the British fleet into some nook or corner, and there hold them in durance vile, until he had concentrated his force at Sackett's Harbor, attacked and carried Kingston and Prescott, and (deo favente) invested Montreal!" An advice, which though obviously productive of delay and peril, was promptly adopted by the Commodore.[2] And lastly, when on the 4th of

[1] Appendix No. 9. [2] Appendix No. 10.

October he arrived at Sackett's Harbor, instead of making a direct attack on Kingston his first object, he announced his intention of directing his operations on Montreal—a determination not suddenly abandoned.[1]

Though the weather was now good, and continued to be so till the night of the 8th, causes of delay multiplied upon the General. "A covering force was now necessary to the movement, and the fleet had not yet returned to the harbor; the arrangements for the removal of Lewis's division, with the necessary supplies of clothing, were improper and defective, and called for amendment—and lastly, the division at Henderson's bay, as well as that at Sackett's Harbor, required supplies, reorganization, and an order of march and battle." Before one half of these conditions could be fulfilled, a sudden and unfavorable change took place in the weather. During the night of the 8th, it became wet, cold and stormy; and so continued till the 12th; when a change of still more importance was found in the condition of the enemy. De Rottenburg, instead of hastening (as Wilkinson supposed he would) to the aid of Proctor, despatched nearly the whole of his effective force to Kingston; which (with the exception of a detachment of two hundred men) arrived safely—preceded by Yeo, who refusing to be cabined and cribbed in Amherst bay, pushed boldly into the lake, and on the 7th, anchored safely off Kingston. But of all the changes which marked this important era, that wrought in the opinions and intentions

[1] Appendix No. 11.

of the General himself, was no doubt the most extraordinary and least to be expected. It will be remembered that on the 4th of October, when arriving at Sackett's Harbor, the General regarded *Montreal* as "the chief object of the campaign," and therefore declined an attack on Kingston; though decidedly recommended by everything in the state of the weather and condition of the enemy; yet now, on the 12th of that month, and under a total change of circumstances —the enemy's garrison increased to "four thousand combatants,[1] his fleet got back to its covering position in the harbor; and the weather, such as made the navigation of the lake impracticable to scows, or other open boats; in a word, when every sober and intelligent man in the army had abandoned the project of attacking Kingston, the General became, ostensibly, a strenuous advocate of that measure; and accordingly on the 18th, made the following demands on the Secretary of War—1st. "That Hampton's division should be called from Chateaugay to Morrisville, on the St. Lawrence, and there united to the main army"—and 2d. "That *before he* (Wilkinson) *abandoned the attack on Kingston*, which by his instructions he was directed to make, it would be necessary to his justification, that the Secretary should, by the authority of the President, direct the operations of the army particularly against *Montreal*.[2]" The functionary to whom these demands were addressed, seeing in them only a new ruse to

[1] Wilkinson's letter of the 19th of October, to the Secretary of War.

[2] Appendix No. 12.

create delay, avoid responsibility, and, not improbably, to defeat the expedition, answered in a way that completely unmasked the General, and shewed that when compelled to act on the dictates of his own knowledge and judgement, he could see as clearly as others, that the object of attack he so strenuously advocated, was not that which either policy or duty recommended.[1] The movement on Montreal was accordingly pursued.

5th. It was not unforeseen, that when the troops were withdrawn from Fort George, that that post, Fort Niagara and the whole American frontier from Lake Ontario to Lake Erie, would be exposed to the attacks of such British force, as from any cause might be left on the Peninsula. To meet a contingency of this kind, General Wilkinson was directed "to put Fort George in a condition to resist *assault;* the only species of attack to be apprehended during the winter—to give to it an efficient garrison of six or eight hundred regular troops; to remove from the command of Fort Niagara, Captain N. Leonard, and to substitute in his stead, Captain G. Armistead of the 1st regiment of ar-

[1] To test the sincerity of the General's passion for attacking Kingston, and if found to be real, to give to the country and the army the benefits of the experiment, Brown and Swartwout requested Lewis (known to be entirely in Wilkinson's confidence) to suggest to that officer, whether "under the favorable change taken place in the weather, it would not be proper to avail themselves of their present position at French Creek, to cross into Canada and gain the position indicated by J. from which the town and batteries could be directly commanded?" To this proposition Lewis promptly answered, "that he would make no such proposal, knowing as he did, the *General's settled determination to make Montreal his object of attack.*"

tillery; to accept the service of a volunteer corps, tendered to the government by P. B. Porter and others, who 'pledged their lives, that if furnished with a few pieces of artillery and officers and men competent to manage them, they would before the season ended, capture, destroy or expel the whole of the enemy's force from the peninsula'—and lastly, to commit to General Moses Porter, the command of Fort George and the Niagara frontier."

It cannot but be thought extraordinary, that a soldier of high pretension and long service, should not have seen the bearing of these orders on the eventual security of the frontier; or that seeing it, he should have neglected to give them execution. Yet such was the fact—Fort George, was deprived of its regular garrison; Fort Niagara, continued under the command of Leonard; the conditions upon which the volunteer corps offered its services, probably procrastinated or refused; and General Moses Porter, taken from Fort George, and made to accompany the expedition. It is unnecessary to add, that had the preceding injunctions been obeyed, Fort George would not have been abandoned; Fort Niagara neither sold nor surprised; nor the whole line of settlements on the strait, plundered and burned.

6th. The testimony given by Mr. Thorne, on the trial of General Wilkinson, abundantly proves the following facts:—1st. That the General begun his expedition, without knowing whether he carried with his army of eight thousand men, subsistence sufficient for five days or for fifty. 2d. That his attention to

this important subject, was first awakened at Grenadier island, in consequence of the supposed effect of the storm on the provision boats. 3d. That sending for the contractor, he sought to learn from him the quantity of loss sustained, and whether any contracting agent would be found near Ogdensburgh, authorized to purchase beef and flour, as might be wanted; and 4th, that though informed, that the *loss was great*, and could not be supplied at Ogdensburgh, any quantity could be immediately furnished at Sackett's Harbor—an offer the General declined accepting, on pretence, "that means of transporting it could not be had."

7th. The reader has already seen in the General's Diary of the campaign, that "on the 7th of November, having passed all the preceding night in the open air, he was in consequence thereof much indisposed." The night thus referred to, was necessarily that preceding the 7th, which, as will be seen, was not passed wholly in the open air, but in part under the cover of Mr. Thorp's house, and in a way disgraceful to General Wilkinson as a man, and utterly inconsistent with his duty and character, as the leader of an army. For the details of this debauch, we refer the reader to No. 13, of the Appendix.

8th. It cannot have escaped notice, that hitherto the General had shown no great willingness to prosecute the objects prescribed to him by his orders. It was not, however, till the 8th of November, that an occasion presented, which in his opinion would justify an immediate abandonment of the enterprise. Informed early in the morning of that day, that not-

withstanding Chauncey's engagements to watch both channels, and prevent or punish any attempt made by the enemy to assail his rear, "he was now pursued by a strong detachment from Kingston, which had already passed Prescott," he hastily convened a council of war, to whom he submitted such an exposition of his own weakness, and of the enemy's strength, as, had it been credited, could not have failed to obtain the sanction of that body for an immediate withdrawal of the army from Canada. "Our provision supply," he said, "is now reduced to ten days' rations of bread, and twenty of meat, and our whole disposable force, including Hampton's division, will not exceed eleven thousand effectives—while that of the enemy, from information lately received and entirely confided in, will amount to somewhat more than *forty-seven thousand men*, apart from the corps now menacing our rear, the number of which is yet unknown. Under these circumstances, the following question is submitted to the council—Will it be advisable, on our part, to march rapidly to the attack of Montreal?" To the no small surprise of the General, the question was affirmatively answered by the whole council.

9th. Having thus shewn what the General did on this occasion, it may not be amiss to shew, what he ought to have done. The rules of war applying to a case of this kind, are few and clear; neither liable to be forgotten nor mistaken, by any one in the possession of his senses. "If on a march, an enemy hang on your rear, and so impede your movement, as may put to hazard the attainment of its object, it becomes

your duty to reconnoitre him carefully, and should his force be inferior, or only equal to your own, to turn upon and destroy him."[1] A second rule is, "never detach, when either intending to make an attack, or expecting to receive one." To these long established maxims, no respect was paid—everything enjoined by the one, or forbidden by the other, being either neglected from inattention, or omitted by design. No regular reconnoissance of the pursuing force, was either made or ordered;[2] and on the 10th, when no doubt remained of the enemy's intention to make an attack, Brown was detached with the most efficient corps of the army to the foot of the rapids; and Bissel, with a regiment, sent to an island on which no enemy was found; while to Boyd and twelve hundred men, was assigned the duty of beating back the enemy if he advanced, *unless in more force than was expected;* in which case, "the *two corps, Brown's and Boyd's* (now fifteen miles apart,) were to *co-operate and act with decision.*" An order in all respects so

[1] Such would have been the fate of the British detachment at Chrystler's field, had Brown and Bissel's corps been added to Boyd's, with orders strictly *offensive*—not merely to beat back the enemy if he advanced, but to pursue, destroy, or capture him. Unskilfully fought as the battle was, (from want of consentaneous action in the several corps) another and general charge, made with the aid of Ulmer's regiment, (just got into position,) would probably have been decisive; and the more so, as Ripley had already turned the enemy's left flank.

[2] "The only attempt made to reconnoitre the enemy, was by General Lewis, who borrowed a spy-glass to look at them when in a wood; but no one advanced beyond our own line to examine them." —*Ripley's testimony given on Wilkinson's trial*, vol. ii.

extraordinary, and in its leading injunction, so impracticable, displays a state of mind on the part of the General, to be accounted for only on the supposition, that though given at daybreak, he had been already making a new experiment of the invigorating powers of alcohol. Nor will other parts of his conduct, on this occasion, lead to a different conclusion; for, when Boyd, after skirmishing with the enemy, sought an interview with the commanding General, for the purpose of reporting the occurrences of the day, and receiving such new orders as they might suggest, he found "the Prophet veiled," and an aid-de-camp at the door instructed to announce, "*that the chief of the army, was not in condition to receive visits, give orders, or even listen to a reporting officer, just returned from a field of battle!*"[1]

10th. Receiving, soon after his arrival at Barnhartz, Hampton's insubordinate letter, virtually refusing the aid of his division in prosecuting the enterprise on Montreal, the first views and feelings of the General, were such as became a commanding officer having a due respect for himself and the interests of his profession. "*I shall,*" he said, "*coerce obedience to the order I have given—arrest Hampton, and direct Izzard to bring forward the division.*" Finding, however, on second thoughts, that this remedial process would put an end to the evil, and thus deprive him of a plausible pretext for terminating the campaign, it was promptly abandoned. Hampton was accord-

[1] Boyd's testimony given on Wilkinson's trial, vol. ii.

ingly left undisturbed in the exercise of a command, he had so flagrantly abused—all notice of his misconduct was transferred to the highest authority of the government,[1] and a council of war resorted to for advice on two points:—"1st. Our force being now reduced, by General Hampton's refusal to join us with his division, to *six thousand men*, shall we continue our march on Montreal? And if not, what shall be the alternative?" The first of these questions was answered in the negative; and in reply to the second, an opinion was given, that the army be withdrawn from Canada, and cantoned for the winter, at French Mills; an advice promptly adopted by the General, and carried into execution on the 13th. Such was the end of a campaign, for which so much preparation had been made, and from which so much had been expected.[2]

[1] Wilkinson's letter of the 24th of November, 1813, to the Secretary of War.

[2] "The grounds on which this decision was taken were—want of bread, want of meat, want of Hampton's division, and a belief, that the enemy's force was equal, if not greater than our own. The opinion of the younger members of the council was, that with Brown as a leader, no character would be lost by going on to Montreal."—*General Swift's letter of the 17th of June*, 1836, *to General Armstrong*.

CHAPTER II.

Blockade of the coast—Predatory war on the shores and inlets of the Chesapeake—Attack on Craney island—Capture of Hampton—Descent on North Carolina—Bombardment of Lewiston—Creek war.

THOUGH it cannot be supposed that Great Britain was unapprised of the advantage to herself, or of the injury to us, that would have resulted from an early and active employment of her naval force, in obstructing the commerce and disquieting the agriculture of our Atlantic frontier; yet, so numerous and urgent were her European engagements, during the summer and autumn of 1812, that it was not till the 26th of December of that year, that she adopted this obvious policy;[1] nor until the 4th of February following, that any efficient blockading armament, appeared on the coast. On this day, two ships of the line, three frigates, and a few smaller vessels, entered the mouth of the Chesapeake, and anchored in Hampton Roads.

[1] On this day was issued a British order of council, declaring the bays of Delaware and Chesapeake, in a state of blockade. On the 20th of March following, the order was extended to the whole coast of the United States, excepting that of *Rhode Island*, *Massachusetts*, and *New Hampshire*.

The employment given to this armament, was at first strictly confined to the occlusion of the bay, and the capture of such armed vessels, as were found within it; but was soon after extended to objects of a different and much less legitimate character—the plunder and destruction of isolated dwellings, barns, stables, and mills. These sources of booty and subjects of mischief, being soon exhausted, the British commander now ascended the bay, and passing by Annapolis and Baltimore, where he would have found an enemy willing to meet him, he, with more of barbarity than could have been expected from the functionary of a nation, professedly fighting the battles of law, religion, and civilization, plundered and burned in succession, the villages of Frenchtown, Havre de Grace, Frederick, and Georgetown.

With the profits and disgrace of this war of brigandage, Cockburn returned to Hampton Roads; where, finding the fleet increased to seven ships of the line, and thirteen frigates, with an auxiliary corps of four thousand infantry, it was promptly determined to attack Norfolk. To do this successfully, and with the least possible risk, it was deemed necessary to begin the operation, by taking possession of Craney Island; which from its local position, at the mouth of Elizabeth river, furnished strong points for covering the town, against any movement made upon it by water. Under these views, the disposable force of the enemy, was divided into two corps—one of which, embarked in boats, and carried directly to its object, attempted to make good a descent on the northern side of the

island; while the other, landed on the main, and availing itself of a shoal, which, at low water, was fordable by infantry, forced its way to the western side. Though made with a considerable degree of steadiness, both attacks failed; with a loss to the enemy of three hundred men, by death, capture, and desertion.[1]

While this unsuccessful experiment had the effect of preventing any new attempt on Norfolk, it probably hastened the brutal outrage, soon after committed on Hampton—an open village, presenting no military object, beyond that of a small militia detachment. To effect the reduction of a place thus inconsiderable, a strong naval demonstration, made on the front of the militia camp, and conducted by the Admiral in person, was thought necessary; while a column of two thousand men, led by Sir Sidney Beckwith, landed lower down the strait, turned the position, and captured the place. This victory, paltry as it was, cost the enemy two hundred men; and from the abuses which followed it, entailed upon the British arms, an infamy which cannot soon be forgotten.[2]

Finding in the Chesapeake no new object of safe attack, Cockburn with a part of the squadron, now

[1] The British force employed on this occasion, amounted to "two thousand five hundred men, that of their opponents to seven hundred and fifty of all arms."—*See General Taylor's official letter, and that of Colonel Bentley, commanding on the island.*

[2] Correspondence between Gen. Taylor and Sir Sidney Beckwith, on the subject of these outrages. In this, the latter substantially admits the truth of the charges made against the assailants—of *theft*, *robbery*, *rape*, and *murder*, and promises not to employ his infantry in any future land operation.

hastened to Ocracock, in North Carolina—where, and at Portsmouth, he again signalized himself by exploits, similar to those he had achieved in Virginia.[1] The only remaining occurrence of a similar kind, worthy of notice, was an attempt to burn Lewistown—a small fishing establishment near the mouth of the Delaware. Among other means, less objectionable, employed by the British commander, to obtain a supply of fresh provisions, "a demand was made on the inhabitants for twenty-five head of live stock," accompanied by a menace, that "if not complied with, the town should be destroyed." The demand being promptly and peremptorily rejected, the threatened attack followed; but failing to make any impression favorable to the assailants, on either the inhabitants or their dwellings, the bombardment was discontinued, and the launches and boats employed in executing it, recalled to the shipping.[2]

While this war of pillage and destruction was pursued on the coast, another of more formidable character, was fast maturing in the south. A portion of the Creek confederacy, seduced by British agents from their friendly connection with the United States, had

[1] "At both Ocracock and Portsmouth, there was much wanton, cruel, and savage destruction of property. Even women and children were stripped of their clothing."—*T. Singleton's report to Gov. Hawkins.*

[2] "The town being seated on an eminence, sustained no injury; the rockets passing over, and the bombs falling short of it. Not a man of the town was killed, though 600 shot, (besides bombs, rockets, and grape,) were fired by the enemy."—*Historical Register, vol. 2, p. 85.*

early in the summer of 1813, given such unequivocal evidence of meditated hostility, as made proper a prompt interposition of an armed force within the Indian limits. In prosecution of this policy, requisitions were made early in June, by the War Department, on the States of Georgia and Tennessee, for three thousand militia; who, reinforced by the third regiment of United States infantry, the Indian peace-party, and such volunteers as the Mississippi territory could furnish, would, it was believed, constitute a force, abundantly sufficient to control the hostile part of the nation.

Of the troops thus required, the Mississippi volunteers only were in service as early as the month of August; occupying a chain of stockaded ports, selected as points of defence for militia, and places of safety for women and children; when Fort Mims (the most southern of these) was, on the morning of the 30th, surprised and captured by a band of six hundred savages.[1] Reaching the fort without having been discovered, and finding the front gate open and unguarded, the assailants, led by Weatherhead, a distinguished chief, made a rush upon it *en masse*, and, after a long and bloody struggle, succeeded in establishing themselves within the stockade. This advantage gained by the enemy, what now remained of the garrison

[1] General Claiborne ascribes the inattention of Beasley, (the commander of the fort,) to information recently given by Col. Hawkins, (U. S. agent residing with the Creek nation,) "which," he says, "unfortunately tended to lessen our apprehensions, and to beget a belief of our almost perfect security."

threw themselves into houses, from which they made a vigorous defence, till, finding the roofs in flames, and no means to extinguish the fire, a retreat was attempted, which, as may be readily conjectured, terminated in a general massacre of the fugitives—men, women, and children.

However disastrous this occurrence may have been to the garrison, and the inhabitants of the neighborhood, who had sought protection in the fort, the general impression made by it on the southern frontier, was favorable to a successful issue of the war—exciting a zeal for prompt and vigorous measures, and finally imbodying a description of men who, principally under the direction of Jackson and Floyd, terminated the contest in a single campaign.

The quota of troops required from Tennessee, and assigned to the special command of General Jackson, being augmented to two thousand five hundred men, that officer began his march for the Indian territory, on the 10th of October, 1813; and on the 22d, reached Thompson's creek. Finding himself in the neighborhood of hostile villages, the General lost no time in attacking and destroying them. On the 28th, Colonel Dyer, with two hundred cavalry, was detached on Littafuschee, a village of secondary order, inhabited by twenty-nine savages, men, women, and children; all of whom were captured, and their cabins destroyed, without loss of blood to either party.

A second detachment, made on a larger scale, and for a more important purpose, was committed to Gen. Coffee, who, on the 3d of November, attacked and de-

stroyed Tallushatchee. Arrived within a mile and a half of the town, the troops took an order of battle, consisting of two lines, so prolonged on opposite sides of the object of attack, and so closed at the ends, as to place it within a loop of oblong form, from which escape, without discovery and fighting, was impracticable. Projects of this kind, for capturing or killing all the occupants of a camp or village, have been frequently made; but it rarely happens that manœuvres, having this object, so entirely succeed, as that employed on the present occasion. Of the three hundred Indians, male and female, inhabiting Tallushatchee, not one escaped. Two hundred men, refusing to give or to receive quarter, were killed; and one hundred women and children captured. The loss of the assailants amounted to five killed and forty-one wounded; several of the latter by arrows, but none mortally.

On the 7th of November, (three days after the preceding affair,) being informed that "one hundred and sixty families, of the peace or United States party, were closely invested by a force of one thousand *Red Sticks*, or British adherents, in Fort Taladega," Jackson hastened to their rescue; and arriving in the morning of the 9th, near the enemy's camp, adopted substantially the order of attack employed by Coffee, and with an effect scarcely less decisive than that of its predecessor; as, "in fifteen minutes after the action began," the enemy was routed, leaving on the field two hundred and ninety-nine killed, and having, as

was afterward ascertained, about the same number wounded.[1]

Had the department of subsistence been as active and successful in its operations as the army, and thus enabled the General to follow up the blows he had so successfully given, there can be little doubt, but that another effort, similar in its character and issue to the last, would have terminated the war within the month of November. But, from causes not well explained, such was not the fact—and so precarious had his supplies become at the date of his last victory, as rendered necessary a prompt and retrograde march to Camp Strother.[2]

On reaching this post, he found, to his great disappointment, that no additional stores had been forwarded to it, during his absence; that much of what he had left behind him, when setting out for Fort Taladega, had been already consumed, and that his only remaining resource consisted in a scanty supply of poor beef, taken from the enemy, or purchased from the Cherokees. Nor was this, though of itself sufficiently alarming, his only cause of disquietude; for, not more to his surprise than to his sorrow, he found that a genuine *maladie du pays*, or militia home-fever,

[1] "The force of the enemy is represented by themselves to have been 1080; of whom 299 were left dead on the field, and no doubt many more were killed, who were not found. It is believed very few escaped without a wound."—*Jackson's letter to Gov. Blount.*

[2] A point selected near the site of his magazines, placing him in communication with both parts of Tennessee, the northwestern frontier of Georgia, and the Indian villages, forming his objects of attack

pervaded the camp, was rapidly breaking down all sense of subordination, and, unless firmly opposed, could not fail to produce a speedy and general desertion of the post. We need hardly remark, that this state of things, so menacing in all its aspects, was met by the General with his characteristic promptitude, decision, and energy; which, though they failed to extinguish the spirit from which the disorder had arisen, so qualified its operation, as left to him the means of maintaining his position, until a sufficient supply of food, and a new levy of troops, enabled him again to take the field.

While Jackson was thus occupied in combating the evils stated in the preceding paragraph, Major-General Cocke, commanding the second division of East Tennessee militia, projected an expedition against the enemy, occupying a position between the Coosa and Tallapoosa rivers, called the Hillabee towns. The direction of this movement was committed to Brigadier-General White, who, beginning his march on the 11th of November, from Fort Armstrong, at the head of a corps of militia cavalry and mounted riflemen, reached the neighborhood of his object in the night of the 17th, and immediately detached a strong party with orders "to surround the town and at daybreak to make an attack upon it." These orders were well executed, and so completely was the enemy surprised, that, of three hundred and sixteen warriors, sixty were killed, and two hundred and fifty-six made prisoners, without loss of any kind to the assailants.

Another affair, having a favorable issue, soon after occurred on the Georgia frontier. Informed, late in

November, that a large body of hostile Creeks had assembled at Autossee, a town on the southern side of the Tallapoosa river, General Floyd raised his camp on the Chatahoochee, and, with nine hundred militia and three or four hundred friendly Creeks, arrived, early in the morning of the 29th, before the town. The Indians being sufficiently apprized of his approach, the action soon began, and was well fought for three hours; when the enemy, losing at once their hopes and their courage, sought safety in flight, leaving behind them, two hundred men killed—among whom, were the Autossee and Tallahassee kings. The American loss on this occasion was seven killed and fifty-four wounded. After burning the houses[1] General Floyd, somewhat encumbered with wounded men, (and being himself of that number,) returned to his former position.

Soon after this affair, and probably with a view of shortening the distance to other points of attack, and of putting himself more directly in communication with Jackson, Floyd quitted his camp on the Chatahoochee, and established a new post farther to the west, to which he gave the name of Camp Defiance. This the enemy determined to carry by a night attack; and, accordingly, approaching it silently and in the dark, they drove in the sentinels, enveloped an out-lying picket, and made a rush in mass upon the front line, which was only saved from disorder and defeat, by the

1 "The number of buildings burnt (some of a superior order, for the dwellings of savages, and filled with valuable articles) is supposed to be *four hundred.*"—*General Floyd's letter of the 4th of December, 1813, to General Pinckney.*

vigorous resistance made by the artillerists and riflemen placed on its flanks. So soon however as the day broke, and there was light enough to ascertain the actual condition of the troops and the enemy, the General hastened to meet the attack with the charge of the bayonet; and in a few minutes put the assailants completely to flight. A pursuit was now made as far as the Canabé swamp; in which fifteen of the enemy were cut down by the cavalry and a few wounded men overtaken. The whole loss of the Indians on this occasion, did not exceed thirty—while it may be presumed, from the regrets expressed by the General, that his own was much greater.

Contemporaneously, or nearly so, with the preceding occurrences, General Claiborne, now reinforced by Colonel Russel and the 3d U. S. regiment, set out from Fort Stoddard, to attack Weatherford and the Alabama band; who, quitting the villages they had hitherto occupied, had ascended the river and built a town on a point of land selected for defence; and, as they believed, made impregnable to an enemy, "by the intervention of their prophets with the Great Spirit." In prosecution of this object, the General began his march westward, on the 13th of December; and, on the morning of the 22d, his leading column was promptly engaged with the enemy, whom it routed before those of his centre and left could be brought into action. A pursuit of the fugitives was now ordered and begun, but soon discontinued, "the road being found nearly impracticable, by swamps and ravines." Short as the battle was, it sufficed for the escape of the women and

children; and was probably hazarded, merely with a view to this object. The loss of the enemy amounted to thirty warriors left dead on the field; while that of Claiborne was "one man killed and three wounded."

It was now the 16th of January, and Jackson still remained at Fort Strother. The newly raised volunteers, expected on the 10th, did not arrive till the 14th, and but amounted to eight hundred men; who, added to such of the old corps as had refused to abandon him, made his whole number, exclusive of friendly Indians, nine hundred and fifty. Though far short of the force counted upon and required, as necessary for a successful termination of the war, the General determined to resume offensive operations. To this course (in which some found evidence of impatience) he was compelled by motives alike numerous and urgent—such as the short time of service assigned to the new corps—the large portion of that which had already expired—the ill effects of inaction on troops just taken from their homes—the perils awaiting some of his posts, and lastly, the advantage of any diversion, made in favor of an important movement, then contemplated by General Floyd. Believing that to meet these and other demands of the case, something should be hazarded, he, on the 17th, began a march on Fort Taladega; where, being assured that an expedition against Fort Armstrong was in preparation, and that, for this purpose, nine hundred hostile Creeks were already collected in a bend of the Talapoosa, he marched directly on that object. In the evening of the 22d, coming on a large and well-

marked Indian trail, he no longer doubted that the enemy was near him, and, wishing to obtain some better information than he yet possessed of the neighboring ground and the enemy's position, he encamped for the night in a square; multiplying his sentinels and pickets, and sending out his spies—one of whom (a friendly Indian) returned with information, that "about three miles distant, there was a large encampment of the enemy; and that, from the whoopings and other noises made in it, and the removal of women and children, they were no doubt apprized of his approach; and would either retire, or make an attack before daybreak"—a prediction entirely sustained by the event. At six in the morning the attack began on the left and rear of Jackson's position, and was vigorously kept up for thirty minutes—but as soon as the day broke, a charge led by Coffee put the assailants to flight; when a pursuit of two miles followed, in which they suffered severely. Coffee was now detached to seize and burn their encampment; but on reconnoitring and finding it strongly fortified, he thought it most prudent to return without making the attempt—a fortunate conclusion, for soon after his return, a brisk feint was made on the right of Jackson's camp, while a real attack, by the enemy's principal force, was directed on its left. After a few fires, followed by a vigorous charge of the bayonet, the enemy was a second time routed and pursued.

After burying the dead and taking care of the wounded the camp was fortified, the better to guard against another night attack, and carry on the preparations, necessary for a return to Fort Strother in the morning.

To this course the General was led by two considerations—the one, that the original intention of the movement, so far as it respected the safety of Fort Armstrong, and the diversion in favor of General Floyd, was already sufficiently accomplished; the other, that if, for the abovementioned purposes, it should be deemed proper to bring the enemy again to action, that object could be sooner and better attained, by a movement of retrograde character, (which to them might have the appearance of flight,) than by any attack made directly on their fortified camp. The army was accordingly put in motion in the morning of the 23d, and in the evening of that day reached Enochoptoko village. Some occurrences which took place during the night, tending to strengthen the General's opinion, "that he would soon be assailed," he was careful, before resuming his march on the 24th, to strengthen his front, flank, and rear guards; and so to alter his route, as enabled him to avoid a dangerous defile, which, had he pursued the path ordinarily travelled, he would have found in his way. About twelve o'clock, when a part of the army with the wounded, had crossed Enochoptoko creek and the artillery were on the point of entering it, an alarm was given from the rear—"which," says the General, "I heard without surprise and even with pleasure; believing that by wheeling my right and left columns, and recrossing the creek above and below the enemy, I should be able to turn their flanks and rear, and cut them off entirely. But, to my astonishment and mortification, I saw both columns precipitately give way. This shameful retreat was disastrous in the extreme.

It drew with it the greater part of the column of the centre, and produced a general consternation and confusion, not easily removed. To resist the enemy, there now but remained twenty-five of the rear guard, one company of the artillerists and Russel's company of Spies. They, however, realized and exceeded my highest expectations. Lieutenant Armstrong, who commanded the artillery in the absence of Captain Dederich, ordered his men to form and advance to the top of the hill; while he and a few others dragged up the six-pounder. Never was more bravery displayed than on this occasion. Amid the most galling fire from an enemy more than ten times their number, they ascended the hill and maintained their position; and when the gun was up, poured on the enemy several discharges of grape-shot, which, followed by a charge, quickly repulsed them. About this time, other parts of the army crossed the creek and entered into the chase. Captain Gordon of the Spies endeavored to turn the enemy's left and partly succeeded—while Colonels Carrol and Higgins, and Captains Elliot and Popkins, pursued them nearly two miles. The defeat was decisive; nor was the march of the army again disturbed."[1]

In the several combats of this expedition, the savages lost in killed one hundred and eighty-nine warriors, found dead on the different fields of battle. The number of their wounded could not be ascertained, but, it may be fairly presumed, was much greater. Jackson's loss,

[1] Jackson's official report.

during the same period, was twenty killed and seventy-five wounded.

In estimating the value of this expedition the General says: "If I am not greatly mistaken, it will be found that no application I could have made of the force under my command, would have tended more to a speedy termination of the Creek war." In this opinion there was no error; for beside its effects on the morale of the enemy, it greatly increased the vigor and diligence of Governor Blount in the exercise of his authority; and at the same time awakened, in the militia of the state, a high degree of military ardor. The requisition for troops, made by the War Department in the preceding July and not hitherto fulfilled, was now promptly complied with, accompanied by another, of state authority; which, with the 39th U. S. regiment of infantry (now assigned to the command of Jackson) gave to him a total of five thousand combatants.

Having arranged a system of supply and assembled the troops, the General, on the 24th of March, began a movement on Tohopeka—an Indian town occupying the southern extremity of a narrow neck of land, formed by a curve of the Tallapoosa river; and fortified on its northern side by a wall, from six to eight feet high, made of the trunks of large trees, perforated with two rows of port holes, and having projecting angles, giving the advantage of cross fires; arriving, at ten o'clock, A. M., of the 7th of April, at the head of the bend, and finding after a short reconnoissance, that the fortified part of the encampment, extended across the isthmus from bank to bank, and that behind it, on the northern side of the

river, lay a great number of canoes, evidently collected for the purpose of escape, (should flight become necessary,) Jackson's plan of attack was speedily formed. Detaching Coffee at the head of his elite, with orders to cross the river, occupy the southern bank of the bend, and make such demonstration on the rear of the Indian encampment as might be found practicable, he hastened to establish a battery on an eminence two hundred yards distant from the point of attack, on which he opened a brisk and well-directed cannonade. Finding, after an hour's experiment, that his cannon made little if any impression on the works; and being by this time assured, that Coffee had gained the position indicated by his orders, he directed that the breastwork should be stormed. The two leading corps assigned to the service were the 39th U. S. regiment commanded by Colonel Williams, and a body of militia under the direction of Colonel Bunch. The conduct of both corps was eminently gallant. Their movement, made under a shower of balls, was unfaltering, and the breastwork soon reached, and quickly surmounted; when the Indian line, thus forced in front, was compelled to fly.

To the production of this result, Coffee's exertions were not wanting. Selecting, during the cannonade, a few expert swimmers to bring over a number of canoes which the enemy had left unguarded, he was enabled to detach a part of his force; who, promptly crossing the river, set fire to the village, and, in the moment of the storm, boldly advanced on the rear of the enemy; and thus essentially contributed to his

discomfiture. Still, the battle was not yet won; availing themselves of the trees, logs, and brushwood, which covered much of the encampment, the savages continued the fight with great obstinacy; and when driven from these, rallied again on the approach of night, under the high and projecting banks of the river. Of their dead, five hundred and fifty-seven were found on the field of battle.[1] "The general belief was, that not more than twenty, of the thousand warriors who fought on that day, escaped wounds or death; and of women and children, two hundred and fifty were taken. Jackson's loss was one hundred and six wounded, and twenty-five killed." By this battle, the Creek war was essentially ended—and soon after followed by a treaty of peace, prescribed by the government.

[1] Jackson's official report.

CHAPTER III.

Project of a winter campaign.—Causes of its abandonment.—General Brown instructed to attack Kingston.—March of this officer to the west.—General Wilkinson's enterprise on La Cole Mills.—Holmes's invasion of Upper Canada.—Mitchell's defence of Oswego.—Appling's attack and capture of British boats, seamen, and marines, at Sandy Creek.—Expedition for the recapture of Michilimackinac.

SUSPECTING, early in October, from the lateness of the season, the inclemency of the weather, and the continued indisposition of the commanding General, that the campaign, then in progress, would terminate as it did—"with the disgrace of doing nothing, but without any material diminution of physical power"—the Secretary of War, then at Sackett's Harbor, hastened to direct Major-General Hampton to employ a brigade of militia attached to his command, in constructing as many huts as would be sufficient to cover an army of ten thousand men during the winter; at such places, within the limits of Canada, and not remote from our own boundary, as would best fulfil the intention of a cantonment, "chosen alike for purposes of offence and defence."

The advantages expected from the adoption of this measure were, 1st. The avoidance on our part, of any-

thing having the color of flight or defeat. 2d. The accomodation to the army of a speedy covering from the inclemency of the weather. 3d. The security of the frontier, now become the principal site of our magazines. 4th. An exemption from the espionage of the enemy, and a deliverance from the mischievous interference of our own magistrates, in the police of the camp; and 5th. The decided advantage, "of holding in a state of concentration, a corps of ten thousand combatants, prepared, the moment that snow and ice had sufficiently covered the roads and bridged the river and lake, to move rapidly in sleighs, on such point of the enemy's line of defence, as circumstances should make proper." These suggestions were well received and entirely approved by the President, and would have become the basis of a winter campaign in 1814, but for the blunders of McClure, the crimes of Leonard, and the disobedience of Wilkinson—the combined effects of which, as already stated, had so covered the western district of New York with misfortune and dismay, as, in the opinion of the President, made proper "a suspension of any operation on our part, not strictly defensive until the spring." In conformity to this opinion, Brown was detached from French Mills to Sackett's Harbor, for the better security of the fleet; Scott was designated for the command of a corps of demonstration and manœuvre on the Niagara; and Wilkinson, with the mass of the army, ordered to take post at Plattsburgh—a point which, in the event of a peace in Europe, was believed to be most likely to attract the enemy's notice in the spring.

No change was made in these dispositions till the latter end of February; when information was received, that, "from an ill-judged distribution made of the British regular force in Canada, Kingston, with the fleet and public stores, was much exposed to capture or destruction; the whole effective force of the garrison not exceeding twelve hundred men, and destitute of all prospect of increase till the month of June, when it was expected reinforcements would arrive from Europe." This information, coming from a source in all respects entitled to credit—presenting, as it did, an object of great interest to the United States, and detailing circumstances peculiarly favorable to a prompt and easy acquisition of it, could not be disregarded. An order was accordingly issued on the 28th of February, directing Major-General Brown "to strike at Kingston, with his whole disposable force, as speedily as possible; to put into exercise all proper means for inducing a belief, in friends and foes, that the recapture of Fort Niagara was the object of the expedition; and lastly, (the better to conceal his purpose,) that he should give to *the first steps of the movement, a direction on that post.*"[1] Unfortunately, circumstances had already occurred to prevent a compliance with this order. In the opinion of the military, as well as of the naval commander at Sackett's Harbor, the force assigned to the service (four thousand men) was incompetent; and that had this been otherwise, the doubtful condition of the ice on the lake, would, of itself, be

[1] Appendix No. 14.

sufficient to forbid the experiment. This opinion being decisive with the President, no new or additional order was given—when (to the surprise of all having any acquaintance with the subject) it was found, that the two commanders, by some extraordinary mental process, had arrived at the same conclusion—that the *main action* (an attack on Kingston) being impracticable, the *ruse* (intended merely to mask it) might do as well, and should be substituted for it—a belief, under which a column of two thousand men was actually put in motion for the Niagara.

Soon after the date of this transaction, Wilkinson, who during the winter had amused himself in projecting enterprises on the enemy's posts,[1] becoming impatient of farther inaction, and desirous of showing what he was able to do, if left to his own direction, began a march at the head of three thousand men on La Cole Mill—occupied by the enemy as an out-post, and ordinarily garrisoned by two companies of the line and a few Canadian militia. Driving before him such pickets and patrols as he found in his way, he, at three o'clock, P. M., of the 30th, reached his object of attack —when, finding that the vigilance of the garrison had secured it against surprise, and that the character of its commander[2] left no hope from a demand of surrender, he resorted to investment and assault. But to the latter, a breach in the wall was indispensable, as neither window, door, nor other aperture, was found on that side of the building which had been selected

[1] Appendix No. 15. [2] Major Hancock.

for attack. Two twelve-pounders, and one 5½-inch mortar were accordingly, placed in battery; and such disposition made of the infantry, as, in the opinion of the General, would most effectually cover the cannon, prevent the escape of the garrison, and intercept any reinforcement sent to its aid from any neighboring post.[1] These measures taken, the battering experiment began, at the short distance of two hundred and fifty yards from its object; but though resolutely continued for two hours, not a stone of the house was dislodged by it; when an order was at last wisely given—"to withdraw the guns, collect the dead and wounded, and under cover of the night, return to Odle-town."

Another expedition, differing little from that of Wilkinson in date, and still less in the abortive character of its issue, was instituted by Colonel Butler, then commanding officer at Detroit. Having, in the last week of February, sufficiently digested his plan of operation, it but remained to designate the troops and the leader, to whom its execution should be committed. A few United States artillerists, two small detachments from the 24th and 28th regiments of infantry, one company of rangers, and a troop of militia dragoons, amounting to one hundred and eighty combatants, were accordingly detailed for the service, and placed under the direction of Captain Holmes, of the 24th; who soon after began his movement, with orders—"to enter Canada, march on Fort Talbot, and attack and destroy

[1] This arrangement must have been faulty. "The garrison was reinforced from time to time to the amount of 200 men."—*Christie's War in the Canadas.*

such other military establishments of the enemy, as might fall in his way."

The first incidents of the march were not flattering. On reaching Point au Plat, the road between that place and Round O was found "so much encumbered by fallen timber and brushwood, and so intersected by swamps, as rendered the passage of artillery quite impracticable." At this point, therefore, Holmes was compelled to abandon his cannon, and with them, all prospect of reducing Fort Talbot, unless this could be effected by surprise. But of this last hope, he was soon deprived—for, on reaching Round O, he found that his advanced guard had already fallen in with a party of Canadian militia, who had no doubt returned directly to the fort, with the news of another invasion. Under these circumstances, Holmes immediately changed the direction of his march, and pressed vigorously forward to the attack of Delaware—a military position taken by the enemy on the Thames—which, as was supposed, might yet be unapprized of his approach. When arrived within fifteen miles of his object, he was informed by a person, not unfriendly to the United States, that "the fact of his approach was already known to Captain Stewart, the commandant of the post, who, to meet it, had collected a considerable force; which, if he (Holmes) pursued his march on the Delaware road, he would, in all probability, soon encounter."

Though far from intending to balk the enemy's purpose, by avoiding a meeting, Holmes saw the impropriety of risking one on ground of which he knew nothing; as must have been the case, had he adhered

to the road on which he had been marching. His determination was therefore promptly and wisely taken, to fall back to Twenty-Mile creek, where, if he found a position at all accommodated to his arms and numbers, he would await the attack, and try the prowess of his enemy. In pursuance of this intention, he began his retrograde movement, leaving behind him a part of the rangers to cover his rear, and retard, as far as might be possible, the progress of the British detachment. By this arrangement, he had barely gained time to reach the creek, and select a position on its western bank, when the covering party, left in his rear, was rapidly driven in by the head of the enemy's column.

What remained of the day, was well employed by the American commander. An order of encampment and battle, of square formation, was quickly adopted, and a portion of the troops assigned to the defence of its several fronts; while the weaker points of the position were hastily strengthened, by logs piled on each other and faced with brushwood. No material occurrence happening during the night, a few small parties of the enemy were seen at daybreak, on the opposite bank of the creek; who, after a short time, suddenly disappeared—a circumstance exciting in Holmes a suspicion, that this display of feebleness made part of a *ruse* intended to draw him into a pursuit. To test the correctness of this conjecture, a small reconnoitring party was sent to examine the ground the enemy had occupied during the night, and ascertain the road by which he had retreated. This service was soon and

carefully performed, and report made that "judging from his trail and his fires, the number of the enemy did not exceed sixty or seventy men; and from the articles of baggage left in his camp and on the road, it was fair to infer, that his retreat had been made with great precipitation."

On receiving this information, Holmes at once renounced his suspicion of a *ruse*, believed he had been deceived with regard to the strength of the British detachment, felt great mortification at having retrograded before so small a party, and determined to pursue it promptly and rapidly. An hour's march was however sufficient, to put an end to these feelings and opinions; as within that short period, he found the enemy in order of battle, judiciously posted, and patiently waiting the success of his stratagem. It will be readily imagined, that Holmes's great anxiety now was, to regain the position he had left; and in doing so, to dupe his adversary into a determination to follow and to fight him, wherever he might be found. Nor did this project fail: Captain Badson, the British commandant, seeing in the movement marks only of flight, and believing this to be the effect of terror, and a settled design on the part of his adversary to avoid a battle, followed the retreating corps rapidly, and on reaching the creek made dispositions for immediately attacking it. Throwing forward his militia and Indians on the northern and western fronts of the camp, he put himself at the head of his regular force, and in column of sections, ascended the eastern bank steadily and gallantly, till within fifteen or twenty paces of its summit; when,

from the destructive fire poured upon it by the detachments of the 24th and 28th, the column broke into squads, and took refuge behind trees and underwood; whence they kept up a faint and irregular fire, till night furnished them with a covering for a general retreat.

Such was the end of the combat and, we may add, of the expedition; which, though effecting no object for which it was projected, furnished evidence in its executive details, of useful talent and increasing knowledge. Of the project itself, it may be enough to say—that, having a worthless object and inadequate means, it ought not to have been adopted. For of what importance to the United States would have been the capture or destruction of a block-house, in the heart of the enemy's country, more than one hundred miles distant from our own frontier; and which, if held, would have been difficult to sustain, and if destroyed, easily reinstated?

These occurrences on the Thames were soon followed by two defences made on the southern shore of Lake Ontario; which, as well in plan as execution, were highly creditable to the national arms. Informed, on the 25th of April, that the enemy's whole fleet lay moored off Kingston, "with all sails bent and top-gallant yards across," it was not unwisely conjectured, that the object of the movement which these circumstances indicated, was the capture or destruction of a quantity of naval stores, which had been deposited at the falls of Oswego. To meet a contingency of this kind, so formidable to our naval prospects, General

Brown, then accidentally at Sackett's Harbor, immediately detached four companies of heavy, and one of light artillery serving as infantry, under the command of Colonel Mitchell, with orders "to occupy and defend the old fort at the mouth of the river, (if attacked by the fleet or otherwise,) so long as would be consistent with the more important duty of covering the naval stores collected at the falls." In obedience to these orders, Mitchell began his march, and on the 30th of April arrived at Oswego.

Finding the fort in no condition for defence; with a stockade much broken and decayed, and five rusty iron guns, (two of which had lost their trunnions, and all without sufficient carriages,) the colonel had barely time to supply some of these defects; when, on the morning of the 5th of May, the British fleet, consisting of four ships, three brigs, and a number of gun and other boats, appeared off the harbor. At one o'clock, P. M., the larger vessels took a position for battering the fort, and soon after, opened upon it a heavy fire; while fifteen boats, crowded with infantry, moved slowly to the shore. When arrived within the range of Mitchell's shot, a fire upon them was commenced, which in a few minutes compelled them to withdraw. A second attempt, made in the same way, was not more successful; when ships, boats, and troops, retired in mass, and stood out of the harbor, for better anchorage. At daybreak of the 6th, they were again seen bearing up under easy sail, when the Wolfe and two other ships, anchored directly in front of the fort; and, for three hours in succession, poured upon it an incessant shower

of balls, grape, and canister; under cover of which, the debarking boats reached the shore and landed the troops. Colonel Mitchell, sensible that the fort was no longer tenable with his feeble force, and that any farther attempt to defend it would jeopard the naval depot at the falls, determined, in the spirit of his orders, to retire upon that point, and avail himself of the defiles it presented. Nor was this determination executed with less coolness and courage, than it was formed —every foot of ground being well contested with the head of the British column, for half an hour; after which, no farther annoyance was given to the retreat. In the morning of the 7th, having collected the small booty afforded by the post, and burnt the barracks, the fleet and army of the enemy abandoned the enterprise, and returned to Kingston.[1]

The second defence alluded to, was the achievement of a small detachment of the 1st U. S. rifle regiment, (not exceeding in number one hundred and thirty-two men,) commanded by Major Appling, and serving as the escort of thirteen boats, laden with naval stores, while on their passage from Oswego to Sackett's Harbor. After a night of hard labor, the boats and their escort arrived at the mouth of Sandy creek; and were about ascending that stream, when they were discovered and pursued by two gun-boats and five barges,

[1] British force—seven sail of armed vessels and a few gun-boats, 6 companies of regular infantry, 1 company of rocket-men—1 battalion of marines, with detachments of artillerists, sappers and miners. Loss, by the enemy's own statement, 90 men: that of Mitchell's corps—69.

detached from the British fleet (then blockading Sackett's Harbor) expressly for the purpose of watching and intercepting them. To take from the chase all possibility of escape, the pursuing force was divided—part proceeding by water, and part by land. When arrived within view of their object, a brisk fire, from the gun-boats, opened upon it. Appling, in the meantime, was not idle—anticipating the mode of the enemy's attack, he took a covered position, until they had nearly approached him; when, rising from his ambush, he met the pursuers with a fire so destructive, that, in ten minutes, the whole British party, boats, barges, marines, and seamen, fell into his hands, without the loss of a single man of his party.[1]

An expedition having for its objects the seizure and occupancy of a new post, said to be established by the enemy at Matchadash, and the recapture of Michilimackinac, was organized early in April; but from a discrepancy in the opinions of the cabinet, on the policy of the measure,[1] its actual prosecution did not begin till the 3d of July. On that day, a detachment composed of regular troops and militia, under the command of Colonel Croghan, was embarked on board of the fleet; which soon after sailed from Detroit for Matchadash. Meeting, however, with many unexpected impediments, "arising from shoals, sunken

[1] The loss of the enemy in this affair was, 1 midshipman and 14 seamen and marines killed, 26 wounded, and 345 captured. Among the latter, were Captains Popham and Spilsburg, four lieutenants, and two midshipmen.

[2] Appendix, No. 16.

rocks, dangerous islands, perpetual fogs, and bad pilotage," this first object of the enterprise was abandoned as unattainable; and that, presented by the trading establishment at St. Joseph's, substituted in its stead. Arriving at this post on the 20th, and finding only a deserted block-house, and all public property removed to St. Mary's, a party made up of soldiers and seamen, commanded by Captain Holmes of the army, and Lieutenant Turner of the navy, was despatched thither, with orders "to capture the place, and destroy such stores, as could not conveniently be brought away." This service being soon and successfully performed, the fleet sailed for Michilimackinac, and on the 26th, anchored off that island.

After a short reconnoissance, and a few experiments, three discoveries, altogether unlooked for, were made: 1st, that, from the great elevation of the fort, its walls could not be battered by the guns of the shipping; 2d, that, from the steepness of the ascent, any attempt to carry the fort by storm would probably fail; and 3d, that, should this mode of attack succeed, it would be useless, "inasmuch as every foot of its interior was commanded by guns, placed on higher ground." These facts leaving no hope of success, but from an attack of the upper battery, the troops were landed on the 4th of August, and conducted to the verge of an old field; indicated by the inhabitants as the position which would best fulfil the intention of the movement—when, to Croghan's surprise, he found himself anticipated by the enemy; and in a few minutes assailed in front, from a redan mounting four pieces of artillery; and

in flank, by one or more Indian attacks, made from the surrounding woods. Succeeding, at last, in repulsing these, and in driving the enemy from the cleared ground, it was soon discovered, that "the position contended for, was not such as was at all proper, for a camp of either siege or investment," being of narrow surface, skirted in its whole circumference by woods, intersected by deep ravines, and furnishing only a difficult and perilous communication with the fleet—Croghan, at once and wisely, withdrew to the lake shore, and re-embarked the troops. Our loss on this occasion was not great, numerically considered; but became deeply interesting, by the fall of Captain Holmes—a young man of high promise, universally respected and regretted.

Having thus failed in attaining the leading objects of the expedition, the farther operations of the armament were directed on a trading establishment, near the mouth of the Nautauwasaga; a river that, in connexion with Lake Simcoe, furnishes the most convenient, if not the only practicable communication between York and the more western British posts. Arriving at the mouth of the river on the 13th of August, and being informed that the schooner Nancy (laden with clothing and subsistence for the garrison of Michilimackinac) had been carried two miles up the stream, Captain Sinclair, after debarking the troops, placed himself within battering distance of the schooner; but "finding his sight often obscured, and his shot much intercepted by sand-hills and trees," he hastened to establish a land-battery—a shell from which, ex-

ploding within the block-house, set fire to the magazine and schooner, and destroyed both.

The distance from Nautauwasaga to York being short, and the road between the two not easily obstructed, it was thought dangerous to leave a garrison at the former, during the winter. The mass of the armament, naval and military, was accordingly withdrawn to Detroit—leaving behind it the Tygress and Scorpion, with orders "to blockade the mouth of the river, so long as the navigation of the lake rendered that measure practicable." Unfortunately, the commanders of these vessels were either less attentive to their duty, or the enemy's force much underrated—as the first named of the two, was speedily taken, and, in a day or two after, became the means of capturing the other.

Remarks. It rarely happens that, in even ill-judged military projects, nothing worthy of approbation can be found: yet such was the case, in the last labor of General Wilkinson—object, time, means, and their employment—all were wrong.

1st. The capture or destruction of an outpost, which, from local position, gave no power of obstructing the approach of the enemy upon us, nor of facilitating any movement on our part upon him, was evidently too unimportant to justify the risk of life and character for the attainment of it; and the more so, as the object was attainable, without risk of any kind, by a little manœuvring. For had the General, availing himself of the ice-bound condition of the river, moved a fortnight earlier, and made a vigorous demonstration on the Isle aux Noix,

while accessible on all points to attack, its commander would no doubt, in conformity to military rules and usages, have recalled his outposts to the defence of his principal position; in which case, a single company would have been competent to the capture or destruction of La Cole Mill.

2d. A vernal thaw of three days in succession—breaking up roads, and rendering them impracticable to heavy artillery, and inconvenient to infantry—was not less objectionable than the object aimed at; and was, of itself, sufficiently important to have caused a suspension of the expedition.

3d. The guns, with which the enterprise was hazarded, were incompetent to breach stone walls—a fact abundantly established by the war of the revolution, which the General should not have forgotten; and which, if he remembered, should have governed his conduct.

4th. It is no small reproach to an officer, that he cannot be made wiser by the experience of others; but how greatly is the reproach aggravated, when he continues to be ignorant, in despite of his own? In the present case, a whole hour's useless firing was not sufficient to show him the inadequacy of his battery; nor was it till after the expiration of a second hour, as uselessly and injuriously employed as the first, that an order was given to withdraw the guns, and retire to Odletown.

5th. How extraordinary that it should not have occurred to the General, that a few *hot shot*, applied to a *wooden roof*, would be more likely to bring an

enemy to terms, than ten times the number of *cold* ones, directed on a *stone wall?* Yet at no time previous to the march of the army, did this idea present itself to his mind; and hence it was, that, in the preparations made for the attack, furnaces for heating shot were entirely forgotten.

6th. Was it to be expected, that a veteran of forty years' service, should not, previously to beginning his movement, have taken measures for reconnoitring the object of his intended attack? And the more so, as this preliminary duty had been not merely suggested, but expressly enjoined, by the council of war, to whom he had submitted his project.[1] Had this obvious and stipulated service been carefully performed, one of two consequences would have followed—an immediate abandonment of the enterprise; or such a knowledge acquired of the mill, its approaches and dependancies, as could not fail to suggest a different and more successful mode of operating against it. In either case, many lives would have been saved, and an army of more than *three thousand* gallant men, spared the discredit of having been foiled by a paltry outpost.

7th. The reader will have perceived from the preceding details, that the project for recapturing Michilimackinac, and breaking up a new establishment said

[1] By Macomb's testimony given on Wilkinson's trial, we find that the project had been submitted to a council of war, who gave it their sanction, "*provided* that, previously to the movement, the avenues to the mill should be carefully reconnoitred;" a condition either entirely disregarded, or carelessly executed, by the General; as the same testimony shows that even the route leading to the mill was unknown to the officer at the head of the column.

to have been made by the enemy at Matchadash, was alike unsuccessful and injudicious; unsuccessful, inasmuch as it failed to accomplish either part of the plan; and injudicious, from the subordinate character of its objects, and the inadequacy of its means. It cannot, however, be denied, that before the declaration of war, and so long after its commencement, as the enemy possessed a decided ascendency on the western lakes, Michilimackinac had, from local position, a value not unimportant to the United States—that of *restraining Indian hostility, by supplying Indian wants.* But neither can it be forgotten, that this value was much lessened, if not entirely lost, by Perry's victory and Proctor's defeat; two events which, besides restoring to us the possession of Detroit, expelling the enemy from Malden, and wresting from him the command of the lakes, virtually terminated the Indian war on that frontier; and thus reduced Michilimackinac to the worthless condition of an isolated post, having no influence, direct or indirect, on the issue of the war. But again: had this been otherwise, and the acquisition of the points designated for attack been important, the means employed fell short of their purpose; as may be fairly inferred from the facts, that Matchadash could not be found from a want of competent pilotage;[1] that Fort Michilimackinac, from its unexpected elevation, was unassailable by either the guns of the shipping, or the bayonets of the infantry;[2] and lastly, that Nautauwasaga, from its proximity to York,

[1] Croghan's official report. [2] Idem.

was considered too difficult to hold.[1] Had Croghan therefore been left with his two battalions, as originally intended, to make part of Brown's division, they would have been usefully employed; while Sinclair, with the naval part of the armament, would have captured Fort William, and returned laden with furs, if not with laurels.[2]

[1] Plan of campaign.
[2] Sinclair's report of the 30th of August.

CHAPTER IV.

Campaign on the Niagara.—Means employed to sustain the movement.—Retreat from Canada.—Army placed in winter quarters.—Prevost's march on Plattsburgh.—Battle on Lake Champlain.—Defeat and capture of the British fleet.—Prevost's retreat to Canada.

THOUGH a general plan of operation for the northern army had been settled early in June[1] two causes prevented its being acted upon in extenso—the one, a total failure in getting together by militia calls and volunteer overtures, a force deemed competent to a campaign of demonstration and manœuvre, on the peninsula;[2] the other, an apprehension that the fleet (which had been long inactive) would not yet be found in condition to sustain projects, requiring from it a vigorous co-operation with the army.

Fortunately, Brown's movement from Sackett's Harbor to the west, though as we have seen a cause of both surprise and regret at the time of its occurrence,

[1] Appendix No. 17.

[2] The object of this was, by manœuvring on his peninsular posts to make necessary detachments from Kingston and Montreal, for their preservation; and thus expose to attack and capture one or both of these vital points.

did much to remove the former of these impediments; while assurances from Chauncey, that he would "sail with his whole force, on or before the 1st of July,"[1] so far abated the latter, as justified a march of experiment on the line of the Niagara. General Brown was accordingly instructed "to cross the river, capture Fort Erie, march on Chippewa, risk a combat, menace Fort George, and *if assured* of the *ascendency* and *co-operation of the fleet*, to seize and fortify *Burlington* Heights, &c.

Acting on these suggestions and dividing the scanty means given him for transportation between the two brigades, the commanding General, on the 2d of July, issued an order, that these corps should cross the strait in the night; and on reaching the Canada shore, take such position (the one above and the other below Fort Erie) as would most effectually prevent the escape of the garrison. So much of this order as applied to Scott's brigade, was well and promptly executed—that officer having occupied the ground assigned to him before midnight. Ripley's movement was made more slowly, and not without some degree of reluctance and even remonstrance;[2] nor was it till six or seven o'clock in the morning, that the second brigade was seen on

[1] "Chauncey writes with confidence of acting on or before the 1st of July. Brown and Izzard ought to receive the stimulus of this information."—*President's note of June, —th., to the Secretary of War.* Why stimulate Brown and Izzard, if the fleet was destined to pursue objects exclusively its own? Or in other words, if a direct co-operation of both arms had not been the basis of the general plan of campaign!

[2] Appendix No. 18.

the Canada side of the river. Means, notwithstanding, were found to complete the intended investment and begin the erection of batteries, when the British commandant, with scarcely a show of resistance, deemed it prudent to surrender himself, his garrison, and his fortress, at discretion.[1]

The fort being placed in the custody of a small detachment, and the prisoners disposed of, General Scott was ordered to move early on the 4th, with the first brigade, Towson's company of artillerists, and Harris's troop of dragoons, in the direction of Chippewa, for the purpose of securing the bridge over the creek of that name, before the enemy had time to fortify or destroy it. After a short march in the prescribed direction, the enemy's elite was found posted at different points on the road, but without seriously annoying the movement, till the head of the column had reached the plain beyond Street's creek, when a charge of some vivacity, made by the 19th British dragoons, was gallantly repelled by a single company of United States infantry—thus furnishing a new proof of the decided superiority of the musket and bayonet over the sabre.[2]

It being now late in the day, the second brigade not yet arrived, and the enemy found strongly posted in defence of the bridge, the brigadier took a well selected position for the night; where, about eleven o'clock, P. M.,

[1] "The captured garrison consisted of 1 major, 5 subalterns, and 120 rank and file."

[2] The infantry was commanded by Captain Crocker. "I have never seen anything more gallant in partisan war, than was the conduct of this officer and his company."—*General Scott's report of the 15th July*, 1814.

he was joined by the commanding General and the remainder of the troops. The hostile armies being now but about one mile and a half apart, their pickets were found, soon after daybreak, briskly engaged in skirmishing—a mode of warfare little adapted to Brown's views, and one he was desirous of terminating in a way which should prevent his adversary from making a second experiment of it. To this end, while he directed his out-lying guards to feign a flight, and thus draw those of the enemy into a pursuit, he detached Brigadier Porter, of the New York militia, with a light corps, "to march rapidly under cover of an adjoining wood, and throw himself between the British skirmishing party and their main body." In executing this order, Porter fell in with an outpost, or patrol of the enemy, which, after a combat of short duration, he routed, and was actively pursuing, when, on debouching from the wood, he unexpectedly found himself in the presence of a heavy British column. We need scarcely add, that his retreat was necessarily sudden and rapid, and not discontinued till he reached the American camp.[1]

Though the intended manœuvre thus failed to produce the effect expected from it, it fortunately became the cause of another, of a character much more important—that of drawing the British General and army from their fortified camp. Alarmed by the firing

[1] "By this time, General Porter's command had given way, and fled in every direction, notwithstanding his personal gallantry and great exertion to stay their flight."—*General Brown's report of the 7th July*, 1814.

on his right for the safety of his out-lying party, and suspecting that Brown, while amusing him with a *petite guerre* in his front, really meditated an attack on his flank, Rial hastened to assemble his whole disposable force, and take a position on the plain, which would better enable him to sustain his outposts, and hold in check any formidable movement attempted by his adversary. The execution of this purpose did not escape the notice of the American General, who quickly seized the occasion it offered for bringing his enemy to battle on open ground, where, it was justly concluded, he would be more easily beaten, than if posted behind his entrenchments. Scott was accordingly ordered to cross the bridge in his front, and, with his brigade and Towson's artillery, attack Rial's left—while Ripley, with the second brigade and Hindman's artillery, should assail his right and rear.

The former of these corps being already under arms, in the exercise of its customary drill, was soon in motion; when its commander, suspecting from the detour necessary to Ripley's movement, that the two attacks could not be made simultaneously, and inferring, from the extended front of the enemy, that the first brigade would be greatly outflanked, promptly ordered Major Jesup, commanding the 25th regiment, to throw himself forward, and give such employment to Rial's right, as would prevent it from disturbing the attack about to be made on his left. This order was quickly executed, and the 25th placed at the short distance of one hundred yards from the British elite; which had, in the meantime, been careful to cover its front with a log

fence. The action soon after commenced in parallel order, and was maintained with much steadiness on both sides; when Jesup, perceiving from the fire of his covered enemy in front, and his great liability to a flank attack, from a body of Indians and Canadian militia collected on his left, that the position he had taken would not long be tenable, gallantly determined to try the effect of the bayonet. A charge was accordingly ordered, and executed with its usual success; as the enemy, declining to receive it, abandoned his position and fled in disorder.

The major being now in condition to take part in the main action, (yet warmly contested,) hastened to place his regiment across the uncovered flank of what remained of Rial's line; and, by an oblique fire on both its front and rear, was soon enabled to put another portion of it to flight. It was at the moment of this occurrence, that the commanding General arrived on the field, bringing with him assurances of speedy support from the second brigade—a circumstance not even now unwelcome, but of greatly diminished interest to the gallant men of the first, inasmuch as a flank movement, then making by the 9th, under the direction of Major McNeil, combined with Scott's pressure in front, was sufficient to terminate the battle, and compel the enemy to withdraw behind his entrenchments.

The wounded being removed, and the dead buried, the whole of the 6th was employed in reconnoitring the adjacent country, and in ascertaining the practicability of attacking, or of turning, the right flank of Rial's position. The result of this reconnoissance was

the discovery of a road formerly opened, but now disused, leading from Street's creek to the junction of Lyon's creek with the Chippewa—which, in the opinion of Majors McCrea and Wood, could, in a short time, and with a small degree of labor, be made sufficient for either purpose. A fatigue party was accordingly detailed, and the road made practicable to wagons and artillery, in the course of the day.

Early on the 8th, the second brigade and Porter's corps, with two companies of artillery, were ordered to march by this new route, cross the Chippewa, and attack the right of the enemy's position; while Scott, with the first brigade and what remained of the artillery, should hold in check its left. Ripley, anticipating much difficulty in the service assigned to him, was somewhat tardy in executing it; when the commanding General, becoming impatient of delay, hastened to the head of the column, and took on himself the direction of the movement.[1] Arrangements were now made for the construction of a bridge over the creek, and sites chosen for batteries, which would entirely command the passage and opposite bank; when the British General, alarmed at the rapid progress of an operation, menacing at once his camp and his communications, destroyed his heavy artillery, abandoned his entrenchments, retreated rapidly on Queenstown, and, after throwing a part of his force into Fort George, took post with the remainder on Twenty-Mile creek.

There being no longer any impediment from the en-

[1] Gen. Jesup's MSS. memoir of the campaign.

emy in marching to the head of Lake Ontario, where, according to the plan of campaign, it was expected Chauncey and the fleet would be found on the 15th of July, (unless previously crippled or beaten,) Brown hastened to the vicinity of Fort George; as well to ascertain the number, location, and character, of the new and exterior defences given to that fortress, as to avail himself promptly of naval co-operation, should the fleet have succeeded in fulfilling the views of the government. Having, on the 22d, sufficiently informed himself in relation to the former, and being entirely disappointed with regard to the latter, he, on that day, began a retrograde movement to Chippewa;[1] where, about mid-day of the 25th, he received information that "Drummond, with reinforcements drawn from York, Burlington, and Kingston, had arrived in the night of the 24th at Fort George; that four sail of the British fleet were then in the harbor, and that a number of boats, filled with troops and probably destined to Schlosser, for the capture or destruction of the military stores collected at that post, were fast approaching Lewistown."[2]

Intelligence like this, stating a movement on the part of the enemy, so probable in itself, so favorable to him, so menacing to us, and so entirely out of Brown's power to interrupt directly, could not fail to disquiet that officer—who, notwithstanding, lost no time in

[1] A measure made indispensable from a want of means to draw supplies from the Genesee, (as intended,) by the absence of the fleet.

[2] His information was given by General Swift, of the New York militia, who, for purposes of observation, had been sent to Lewistown

adopting the only measure of counteraction left him—that of a rapid march on the enemy's posts, in the hope that to secure these, he would promptly recall the detachment sent, as was conjectured, against Schlosser.

It was in executing this measure, that Scott, to whom the service was assigned, after a short march of two miles, discovered a party of British infantry near the great falls, which fell back slowly on his approach. On reaching Wilson's inn, the brigadier was farther informed, that "Rial lay directly in his front, and was but separated from him by a narrow wood, intending (as was reported) to attack Brown's camp at daybreak the ensuing morning." A messenger being despatched to headquarters with this information, Scott, from the urgency of the case which had put him in motion, and the spirit of the orders given him, concluded that it was his duty to attack the enemy immediately, without waiting the arrival of the second brigade; and, accordingly, after detaching Major Jesup with the 25th regiment to cover his right, he pushed vigorously forward through the wood, in his front, with the 9th, 10th, and 22d regiments, supported by Towson's artillery; and was soon engaged in a conflict, equally obstinate and sanguinary, which continued for an hour with little, if any remission, and no decided advantage on either side.

During this interesting period, Jesup was not unemployed. Finding a road leading to the enemy's position, which they had either not seen or neglected to occupy, he lost no time in availing himself of it; and, in a few minutes, was able to place himself on the left

flank of the British line, composed altogether of Canadian volunteers and militia, whom he immediately routed. In the pursuit which followed, several prisoners were made, by whom the major was informed, that "Drummond was fast advancing from Queenstown with a strong reinforcement, and could not now be far distant." Under this new circumstance, Jesup boldly determined to seize the road, and hold Drummond in check, till the brigades of Ripley and Porter could be brought into action; nor had he been long in his new position, when Major-General Rial, with a large suite, fell into his hands. It being now dark, the firing in his front greatly abated, himself entirely uninformed of the position and views of the commanding General, and much encumbered with prisoners, he pressed cautiously forward, and in a short time was able to place himself on the right of Ripley's brigade.

During the early part of these occurrences, General Brown, apprized by the weight and continuity of the firing in his front, that the first brigade had encountered a force much more formidable than that of an ordinary picket or patrol, gave orders that the second, with Hindman's artillery and Porter's volunteers, should immediately move to its support. After which, setting out promptly himself, he joined General Scott; and finding, on his arrival, that the ranks of this officer had been greatly thinned by the preceding action, and that such part of the corps as had escaped wounds and death was much exhausted by fatigue, he left it for the moment where he found it, and hastened forward with Majors McCrea and Wood to reconnoitre the enemy,

and select ground for the interposition of the advancing corps. In performing this service the attention of all was speedily attracted by the site given to the British artillery; which, from its greater elevation and other circumstances, gave it a complete command of the field of battle, and drew from the senior engineer[1] a decided opinion, that "to gain the victory, the first thing to be done was to storm the British battery." The commanding General, entirely coinciding in the opinion, hastened to meet the advancing corps, and on doing so, directed Colonel Miller to put himself at the head of the 21st regiment, and make the charge.[2] We need scarcely add, that the order was executed with the characteristic alacrity and boldness of the veteran to whom it was given.

Still, however decisive the appearance of the achievement at first view, it was soon discovered that, in fact, it was but the signal for renewing the sanguinary conflict already noticed. Stimulated to new efforts by the arrival of large and successive reinforcements, several bold and vigorous attempts were made by Drummond to recover the guns and the ground he had lost; but in neither of these could he succeed—all were repulsed by the well-directed fire and steady charges of the American line;[3] which, after the first

[1] Major McCrea. [2] Appendix No. 19, Miller's letter to Brown.

[3] After Miller's capture of the enemy's cannon, Scott, and the remains of his brigade and Porter's volunteers, were brought into line for their defence—the former on the right, the latter on the left. During the remainder of the contest, two charges of gallant character were made on the enemy's left flank by Scott; in the last of

or second repulse of the enemy, had been increased by the shattered remains of Scott's brigade and Porter's volunteers: when, at last, the enemy, deprived as well of the example as the direction of their gallant leader,[1] and losing all hope of effecting their object by any new effort of their now diminished force, withdrew from the field; leaving behind them, their dead, their wounded, and the nine pieces of artillery, for the recovery of which, they had dared so much and bled so freely.

Nor, though gladdened by a victory over a force, numerically much superior to their own, was the condition of the United States army, in other respects, as eligible as could have been desired. It was now midnight—the moon had been long obscured—all was darkness—much of their morning strength lay killed or wounded on the plain—an hour had passed without any attempt on the part of the enemy to renew the contest—all believed that the struggle was at an end, and the proud feeling which had hitherto sustained the assailants, was fast subsiding into mere corporeal sensations—a desire of rest, inseparable from over-action, and a tormenting thirst, which could only be assuaged by a change of place. To refresh these gallant and nearly exhausted men, became, therefore, a primary and important duty; which the commanding General, who (though severely wounded) still kept the field, hastened to discharge. An order was accordingly issued, devolving the command on Brigadier Ripley, and au-

which, he received the two wounds which compelled him to leave the field.

[1] General Drummond, the British commander-in-chief.

thorizing "a speedy return of the army to its camp, with such of the killed and wounded as could be collected, and (if possible) with the cannon captured from the enemy." What of this order was practicable, was executed. The army was promptly withdrawn, and a part of the killed and wounded brought off, but, from *a want of horses*, *harness*, and *drag-ropes*, the captured guns were left behind.[1]

When, on the arrival of the troops at Chippewa, the lastmentioned fact was reported to General Brown, he immediately directed Ripley to refresh the men, assemble the whole force that the camp could furnish, occupy at daybreak the position he had left, bury the dead, and bring with him the captured guns. From some cause not well explained, the movement thus ordered did not begin till after sunrise,[2] and was soon discontinued, in consequence of information received by the brigadier, that "the enemy was already in possession of the heights and the cannon."[3] After a short halt, the division returned to Chippewa, and were now actively employed in converting the works recently thrown up by the enemy, into defences against him—when a report was circulated by a nameless volunteer, that "Drummond, at the head of a heavy British column, was fast approaching the American camp." Unfortunately, this report, though coming, as we have

[1] Colonel Jones's sketch of the campaign. [2] Idem.

[3] From a statement made by Major Hindman, commanding the artillery of the division, it would appear that the enemy (probably receiving another reinforcement) repossessed himself of the guns and the position, soon after Ripley left them.

seen, without any sufficient authority, and wholly unfounded in truth, was taken for granted; the camp hastily raised, a strong position abandoned, and a retreat, of very equivocal character, made to the ferry opposite Black Rock.[1] From this point, it was General Ripley's intention to have immediately crossed the strait, and placed the division within the limits of the United States; but finding his purpose strongly opposed by McCrea and Wood, whom he consulted on the subject, he hastened to Buffalo, in the hope of obtaining General Brown's approbation of the measure. In this, he signally failed; the proposition, so far from being favorably received, was severely rebuked, and written orders promptly issued, that "the division should remain at Fort Erie; and if attacked, defend that point strenuously—that the engineers, McCrea and Wood, should immediately employ themselves in repairing the old, and making such new defences as would be practicable; and lastly, that Brigadier-General Gaines should, without delay, repair to Fort Erie, and take command of the division and post."[2]

The forward movement ascribed to Drummond on the 27th of July, and which, as we have seen, caused Ripley's hasty and ill-judged retreat from Chippewa, was not made till the 3d of August. Arriving on that day in the neighborhood of Fort Erie, and having ascertained that his adversary's camp was sufficiently

[1] General Jesup's memoir of the campaign.

[2] General Brown's memoir of the campaign. The appointment of Gaines was a consequence of the wounds received by Generals Brown and Scott.

secured against a coup de main, he found himself compelled to resort to the slower processes of investment and siege. For this disappointment, however, he was not a little consoled by information, that Brown's magazines, formerly established at Schlosser, had been recently transferred to Buffalo; where they would be found without defence, excepting such as might be expected from the militia of the town. Not to lose a moment in availing himself of a circumstance so favorable to his views, he immediately despatched Colonel Tucker of the 41st regiment, and a corps of twelve hundred combatants, with orders "to ascend the Niagara, land in the night on its southern bank, and, at daybreak of the 4th, strike at the depot."

Fortunately, General Brown anticipating a contingency of this kind, had, on the 2d, withdrawn Major Morgan, and a battalion of riflemen, from Fort Erie to Black Rock, with orders to "watch all water movements made by the enemy up the Niagara; and should any take place in force, having a direction indicating an attack on the public stores, he should instantly abandon his post, and take such new position between the enemy and the town, as, in his judgement, would best enable him to defend the latter." In the discharge of this duty, Morgan was his own sentinel, and descrying, on the 3d, twenty-three boats ascending the river, filled with British troops, he had no longer a doubt, that Buffalo, and the public stores, were their objects; and accordingly, quitting Black Rock, hastened to select a new position, conformed to the orders he had received. Such was soon found on the western

bank of Conajocta creek; where he had barely time to break down the bridge over which he had passed, and put into line a number of logs found on the bank, when, at four o'clock in the morning, he was apprized by his pickets, that the enemy was fast advancing upon him.

Finding the creek unfordable, and the bridge demolished, Tucker's first attempt was to re-establish the latter, under the fire of a strong advance guard, thrown forward on the right and left of his pioneer party; but soon discovering that the experiment was a losing one, the project was abandoned, and both guard and pioneers drawn back to a position in the rear; whence the combat was continued at long shot for nearly an hour. This pause, as it may be called, in the action (for little execution was done by it on either side) gave Tucker time to recollect, that a post he was unable to carry by direct attack, might notwithstanding be successfully turned. A flank movement, with this view, and in considerable force, was accordingly made by his left, and a ford unexpectedly found, but so covered by the fire of sixty rifles, which Morgan had wisely detached for the purpose, that the head of the column speedily recoiled, and soon after fell back on the main body. Having thus failed in both attempts to cross the creek, the British commander was readily brought to the conclusion, that, to avoid greater evils, it became his duty to retreat to his boats, and repass the river as speedily as possible.

In a second enterprise, not dissimilar in object from the preceding, Drummond was more successful. Ap-

prized that three small vessels, making part of the Erie fleet, and employed in covering the communication between the fort and its magazines, now lay at anchor in the mouth of the lake, he, in the night of the 12th, despatched Captain Dobbs of the navy, with a number of boats strongly manned, to attack and carry them. The assailants being mistaken for provision boats, coming from Buffalo to the fort, were permitted to drift on the hawsers of the Ohio and Somers, cut their cables, mount their decks, capture their crews, and carry off the vessels.[1] The Porcupine, by an accident not detailed by either party, escaped capture.

It was now the 12th of August; Drummond's preparatory measures, as well defensive as offensive, being finished, his trenches opened, his batteries established, and his covering camp fortified, he, in the morning of the 13th, began his attack on the fort by a heavy cannonade and bombardment. This was continued throughout the day, renewed in the morning, and kept up till seven o'clock in the evening of the 14th, but without having produced any important alteration in the condition of either the garrison or the works.

General Gaines, now in command of the division, reasoning from the character of the attack, the calculations probably made by the enemy of its efficiency,

[1] Notwithstanding the number of muskets and pistols which were fired, and the bustle inseparable from enterprises of this kind, neither the fort nor the Porcupine attempted to fire, as we drifted by them; nor did we receive a shot, until we passed Black Rock, though they might have destroyed us with ease.—*Lieut. Conklin's report of the 16th August*, 1814.

and the state of the weather, which had become dark and rainy, concluded that an assault would be made during the night; and hastened accordingly to make such disposition of his comparatively small force, as would best enable him to repel it. To the ordinary precaution of doubling his night-guard, corps of infantry were assigned to the support of the several batteries; while the overplus was held in reserve, for such occasional service as might become necessary.

About two o'clock in the morning, a heavy British column was found approaching Towson's battery, (forming the northwestern angle of the work,) when a few well-directed discharges, and a shower of musket-balls from the 25th regiment of infantry, compelled it to fall back. A second attempt, made on the same point, was equally unsuccessful, and induced its leader to change his plan, enter the lake, and turn the battery and camp on their western flank; but here again the moveable part of the defence, the 25th under Wood, and the 21st and 23d under Ripley, met the attack, and repulsed it speedily and decisively. Consentaneously with the preceding occurrences, the enemy's central column was found pressing forward on the line of entrenchment which connected the batteries of Towson and Williams; but, though making some vigorous efforts, they were promptly checked by the fire of Biddle's and Fanning's artillery, sustained by that of the 1st rifle regiment, and Porter's volunteers. While such were the failures of two of the enemy's assaulting columns, the third, conducted with better fortune, or more skill, (after several repulses in

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which it suffered greatly,) got at last possession of the exterior bastion of the old fort. To regain this, several gallant efforts were made by the sustaining corps, but without success; when an explosion of a quantity of gunpowder, in an adjoining apartment, expelled what it did not kill of the occupants, completely reinstated our authority, and virtually terminated the combat; the enemy leaving on the field, two hundred and twenty men killed, one hundred and seventy-four wounded, and one hundred and eighty-six made prisoners, including twenty-one officers.

Though thus signally defeated in his attempt to carry Fort Erie by storm, the British commander, adhering to his purpose of reducing it, was now busily employed in opening new trenches, and establishing a powerful additional battery. General Brown, to whom these facts were reported, seeing in the pertinacity of his adversary, and the course he pursued, that a second assault, with increased means, might soon be expected, and having little if any hope left that the reinforcements ordered by the government,[1] would reach him in time to obviate the peril of such a contingency, gal-

[1] "I thank you most heartily for what you have done for our relief; but what I hear of Gen. Izzard's *habits, character*, and *intentions*, is so unsatisfactory, that I hope nothing from him. McCrea, who is a good judge of generals, puts him at the very bottom of the list, and Colonel Snelling, his most intimate and confidential friend, warns us against placing any confidence in his support; knowing his aversion to the service given him, and his uniform intention not to perform it. We must, therefore, if saved, do the business ourselves." —*General Brown's letter to the Secretary of War of* 31*st August*, 1814.

lantly determined to share it with his comrades. Returning accordingly to Fort Erie, though not yet recovered from his wounds, he, on the 2d of September, resumed the command of the division; and after much careful inquiry into the topographical relations subsisting between Drummond's covering camp, and his advanced posts, came to the conclusion, that, though greatly inferior in numerical force, it was still possible, by a sudden and vigorous effort, to become his own deliverer.

In conformity to these views, the whole disposable force of the division was assembled at mid-day of the 18th, and being formed into two columns of attack, that of the left (composed of Porter's volunteers, Gibson's riflemen, and the remains of the 1st and 23d regiments of United States infantry) was marched by a road cut through the woods, on the right flank of the enemy; while that of the right, commanded by Brigadier-General Miller, (made up of the remains of the 9th, 11th, 17th, and 19th United States regiments of infantry, sustained by the 21st,) was pushed forward into a ravine forming the western front of the enemy's position; with orders to force his entrenchments, between batteries Nos. 2 and 3. These orders were promptly and ably executed, and, in a period of time unexpectedly short, the three batteries of the enemy, his two block-houses, and the whole of his entrenchments, were captured or destroyed.

In producing this splendid result, the column led by Porter, Wood, and Gibson, had its full share. After turning the enemy's right, it carried, by storm, a strong

block-house, in the rear of battery No. 3; destroyed in the latter, three twenty-four-pounders, and their carriages, blew up the magazine, and then hastened to co-operate with Miller, in reducing battery No. 2. "It was thus," says General Brown, "that in a close action, not exceeding an hour, one thousand troops of the line, and an equal number of New York militia, blasted the hopes of the enemy, destroyed the fruits of fifty days' labor, and diminished his effective force one thousand men—circumstances, producing, on the part of Drummond, an immediate abandonment of the siege, and a speedy retreat to Chippewa.

An attack so bold in its conception, so successfully executed, and so decisive in its effects, could not be made without loss; amounting in the aggregate to five hundred and eleven men, including commissioned and non-commissioned officers and privates. Of the first of these classes, we had to lament the early death of the gallant Wood, and the intrepid Gibson—two men, whose skill, courage, and patriotism, would have done honor to any service, or to any station.

Apprized, about the middle of July, of the arrival of two British regiments at Montreal, destined, as was reported, "to reinforce the garrison of Kingston, and sustain the war on the peninsula," the government hastened to adopt measures, which should best enable it to meet such a contingency. Orders were accordingly given to General Izzard, then commanding at Plattsburgh, "to march a column of four thousand men, as expeditiously as possible to Sackett's Harbor; from which point, if no reinforcement had already reached

Kingston, he should, in concert with the fleet, make an attack on that post. But, on the other hand, should he find himself anticipated by Prevost, in relation to Kingston, or forbidden by anything in the condition of our own fleet from making the attack, he should, in either of these cases, avail himself of the shipping, run up to the head of the lake, put himself in communication with the division of the left, and throw his whole force on Drummond's rear."[1]

It was certainly little to be expected, that a General, who, on the 19th of July, under apprehensions for the safety of Brown's division, had spontaneously suggested the propriety of a march, on his part, to the St. Lawrence, and a demonstration on the rear of Kingston,[2] should, on the 11th of August, when the causes for alarm were both multiplied and increased, have shown any hesitation in executing an order, requiring only a prompt and vigorous movement, to have given not merely an eventual security to his gallant comrade, but a decisive and triumphant issue to the campaign in the north. Such was, however, unfortunately, the fact. Finding, in the plan prescribed to him, an extension of his own, substituting, for a mere *demonstration on the rear of Kingston*, an *attack on its front*, in co-operation with the fleet, the General at once discovered, that neither his own plan nor that of the

[1] Appendix, No. 20.

[2] "I look with uneasiness to the westward. Should any accident occur in that quarter, ought I not to move to the St. Lawrence, and threaten the rear of Kingston."—*General Izzard's letter of the 19th July to the Secretary of War.*

government was practicable; and that any attempt to execute either, would be necessarily followed by disappointment and disgrace, with the no small aggravation, that "everything he left behind him (excepting two redoubts on Cumberland Head) would, in three days after his departure, be in the possession of the enemy."[1] Under these and other forebodings of evil, he was careful to announce to the War Department, his total disavowal of all responsibility for whatever might happen; but his willingness, at the same time, to execute the orders he had received, "*as well as he knew how.*"

Beginning his movement accordingly on the 29th of August, and having in his choice two routes to Sackett's Harbor—one of which required a march of ten days, and the other a march of twenty, he made no scruple of preferring the latter;[2] though, by doing so, he necessarily put much to hazard by giving time to Prevost to reinforce his western posts. Nor was this the only measure he adopted, having a similar tendency. "From a desire," he said, "to bring in his column fresh and ready for immediate service," he limited its daily march to fifteen miles; an indulgence altogether unnecessary, and never granted, when there is anything urgent in the character of the service to be performed. But even this was not enough to satisfy Mr. Izzard's conservative theory; a halt of four days was made at the south end of Lake George; professedly,

[1] Appendix, No. 21.

[2] *Twenty miles* formed Cæsar's justum iter dies; and if the case was urgent, considerably more.

for the purpose of refreshing troops, not a man of whom was either sick or weary.[1] And again: when arriving at Sackett's Harbor on the 16th, though finding that Kingston had not been reinforced, and that our fleet had a temporary ascendency on the lake,[2] not a single measure was taken for availing himself of these advantages, and attacking, as ordered to do, that important post. For this omission, a sympathy for Brown and his division was made the pretext. "The perils," he said, "of this heroic band are now so multiplied and menacing, as make it my first and most important duty, to leave Kingston untouched, embark my troops on board the fleet, run up to the head of the lake, land on the northern side of the Niagara, and throw myself on the rear of Drummond." This decision, though thus decidedly announced, was short-lived. A storm of wind and rain occurring, which prevented the fleet from sailing, the General now besought advice how he should proceed: whether by a land march over bad roads in wet weather, or, by waiting the cessation of the storm, avail himself of a passage by water. Strange as it may appear, he preferred the former, and in a letter of the 18th announced this intention to the government. Finding, however, that the choice he had made, was much censured by the army, and even denounced by a part of his staff,[3] as a new ruse to

[1] Appendix, No. 22.

[2] Such was the well-known condition of the fleet, when Izzard arrived at Sackett's Harbor.

[3] Statement of Major O'Conner, Assistant Adjutant-General of the division.

avoid a battle with Drummond, as he had already evaded an attack on Kingston, his resolution was shaken, his march suspended, and a correspondence opened with the naval commander on the old question, "by what route he should move." In this attempt to obtain from that officer a sanction for his own opinion, he signally failed; no answer was vouchsafed to the question, and merely a notice given of the time and place, at which the troops would be received on board of the fleet, and "carried to any point on Lake Ontario, he might think proper to indicate."

Though sensibly rebuked by the manner in which his inquiry had been treated, he felt himself in no small degree consoled by two circumstances—the latitude given him in choosing a landing-place; and the limitation put by the commodore on the number of troops the fleet could conveniently carry—when, forgetting alike the orders of the government, the promises made to Brown, and the assurances given to the quartermaster-general the evening preceding, he at once and peremptorily declared for the mouth of the Genesee! At this place, he found himself with three thousand men early in the morning of the 22d, but, as might have been readily foreseen, entirely destitute of the means of transportation. It was not, therefore, till the 24th, he resumed his movement, when, adhering to his purpose of "bringing in his corps fresh and ready for action," he directed his march, not on Buffalo, but on Batavia—where an unexpected solace for all past doubts, labors, and terrors, awaited him, "in a full assurance that, on the 17th of the month, Brown had, by

a skilful and intrepid attack made upon Drummond, become his own deliverer."

In an interview with this officer on the 26th, though professing a willingness to discharge his remaining duty, he restricted its objects to a siege of Fort Niagara; and even hazarded an opinion, that this fort retaken, the campaign might, with propriety, terminate. To this proposition, in both its parts, Brown refused his assent—justly remarking, that, as a military post, Niagara was not worth holding by either belligerant; and that its garrison, now composed wholly of invalids and convalescents, formed no object worthy of pursuit; and again: that, as he understood the orders, under which the division of the right had marched, they prescribed three objects, "an attack on Kingston, which has been omitted; the relief of the division of the left, which had been accomplished; and, lastly, the *attack and capture of Drummond's army*—involving that of all the British posts on the peninsula."—"This," he added, "remains to be done, and may be accomplished, with scarcely a doubt of success, if, for the purpose, a proper direction be given to the two divisions united." It was not, however, till after the stimulus of a second conversation with Brown, that Izzard could be prevailed upon even to cross the Niagara; when, on receiving a full exposition of the proposed project of attack, and perceiving, after a short reconnoissance of Drummond's position, the probability of its success, he for a moment adopted the measure, and even detached Brown to direct some labor, preliminary to the movement; when, availing himself of information just re-

ceived, that "four of the enemy's ships were now at the mouth of the river—that the navigation of the lake had been abandoned to Yeo, and that Chauncey had been driven for shelter, under the batteries of Sackett's Harbor,"—he at once relapsed into his former creed, and adopting the Hudibrastic strategy of *preserving the army for the next campaign*, ordered "a retreat across the St. Lawrence, and winter quarters to be taken for the troops,"—thus literally fulfilling his own prediction, that the expedition would terminate in disappointment and disgrace.

While Izzard was making these extraordinary displays of military skill and ardor, an expedition was instituted in the west, having for objects the security and quiet of the Michigan territory during the approaching winter, an attack on Burlington Heights, and an eventual junction with Brown's division on the Niagara. The force assigned to the service was composed of mounted gunmen, furnished by Kentucky and Ohio, one company of United States rangers, and seventy friendly Indians, making in the aggregate, seven hundred combatants. Though failing in its principal object, the movement, from the activity and judgement with which it was conducted, may not be unworthy of a short notice.

Beginning his march on the 22d of October, General McArthur (the better to conceal his ulterior views) gave to his first steps a northwestern direction; and entering the enemy's territory, near the mouth of the river St. Clair, he traversed the intermediate country, between that point and Oxford, without exciting any

visible alarm on the part of the inhabitants. At Burford, which he reached the day following, he was apprized that the expedition and its object were not unknown to the Canadian authorities, who had already assembled a body of militia and Indians, on the road leading from Dover to Burlington. Finding in this information a new motive for quickening his movement, he pressed rapidly forward to Grand river; where, to his great mortification, he found that stream increased to a torrent, and on its opposite bank, a body of militia and Indians, prepared to dispute the passage. Thus forbidden to advance, and having no motives to remain where he was, he quickly resolved to give a new direction to his march, strike at a body of militia assembled at Malcomb's mills, and put himself on a route, by which he might, as circumstances should direct, effect a junction with Brown at Fort Erie, or secure to his party an uninterrupted retreat to Detroit. In prosecution of these views, he moved rapidly to the mills, where the Canadian militia, increased to five hundred effectives, were strongly posted behind a creek of difficult passage. Arrangements were now promptly made for a double and consentaneous attack on their front and rear—which, but for an Indian yell prematurely given, would, in all probability, have entirely succeeded, and enabled him to kill or capture nearly the whole party. This drawback notwithstanding, the enemy, after a short but sharp conflict, was routed, with the loss of eighteen killed, nine wounded, and one hundred and eleven captured. "In this excursion, the enemy's resources were essentially impaired by the destruction

of five mills, and much forage and provisions, prepared for the use of his army on the peninsula, and for carrying on, during the winter, any hostile attempt made in the direction of Detroit."

Another circumstance in the story, not less creditable to the General is, that the whole of this long and perilous march through an enemy's country, was accomplished in twenty-six days, and with the loss only of one man.

The reader will not have forgotten the calamity and ruin to which everything at Plattsburgh and its neighborhood, was doomed by Izzard, "within three days after his departure from it." Fortunately, the prophetic powers of the General were not less imaginary, than his military talents; and, instead of the painful duty of chronicling new evidence of national discomfiture and disgrace, we have now the more pleasing occupation of recording a successful defence made of Plattsburgh, and the capture and destruction of a second British fleet.

Relieved by the fall of Napoleon, from the long-continued and exhausting pressure of her European engagements, Great Britain, during the winter of 1813–'14, found, at her disposition, a vast military force; inured to war, well-instructed in its duties, abundantly supplied, and ably commanded. Of this force, a large portion was promptly transferred to America, for the purpose of retaliating aggressions made by the United States on her Canadian territory—of recovering what of this had been lost during the war—and of giving to the whole, a decided protection against future inju-

ry. To these orders of general character, were added others of more specific requirements—"prohibiting distant and hazardous marches into the interior; limiting the immediate employment of the armament to the capture and destruction of armed vessels and naval depots; and lastly, to the seizure and occupation of some strategic point on Lake Champlain, which should materially tend to the security of Lower Canada."[1]

In conformity to these orders, the reinforcements assigned to Prevost, consisted of four brigades, which, with the exception of two regiments sent to Drummond, were assembled about the last of August, on the American frontier, for the purpose "of attacking Plattsburgh, capturing the United States fleet on Lake Champlain, and destroying a naval depot established at Vergennes, in concert with a fleet now preparing, and nearly ready for service." Beginning the movement accordingly in September, the British commander was able, on the 6th, to place himself before Plattsburgh, without much of either actual loss or disturbance, in his march thither. Finding, after a short reconnoissance, the American defences to consist only of three redoubts and two block-houses, and assured of Izzard's movement to the west with a large detachment, his first determination was to cross the river, ascend the heights, and assail the redoubts in the rear. But being soon after apprized that one of his columns was much fatigued and required rest, and being also assured by the British naval commander, that "he would, at daybreak

[1] Life and services of Sir George Prevost.

of the 10th, be entirely prepared to enter the lake and attack the American fleet, with a certainty of beating it," this first intention was changed, and an order given to erect batteries and bring forward heavy ordnance to bombard the American redoubts, and otherwise cover the intended assault.

This service was satisfactorily performed between the 6th and the 11th; when, at seven o'clock, A. M., of the latter, the British ships were seen turning Cumberland Head, and bearing down in order of battle on the American squadron, which now lay at anchor opposite the town, and somewhat beyond gun-shot distance from it. At ten minutes after eight o'clock, the two fleets, nearly matched in men and guns,[1] began the engagement—the Confiance anchoring, at two cables' length from the Saratoga, and the Linnet and Chub, at a distance somewhat less from the Eagle, while the vessels of smaller size, arranged themselves opposite to each other. The wind being light, and the water smooth, the guns of both fleets were well directed, and a destructive fire continued for two hours in succession, when McDonough (finding nearly all his starboard guns dismounted) dropped a stern anchor, cut his bower cable, and winding the ship, was then enabled to bring an entire broadside on his adversary. The commander of the Confiance attempted a similar manœuvre, but without success; and unable to sustain the conflict

[1] The British brought into action sixteen vessels, mounting 115 guns, with crews, amounting to 1,000 men. The American force amounted to fourteen vessels, mounting 102 guns, with 850 men.—*Cooper's Naval History*, vol. 2, pp. 428—30.

longer, in a few minutes surrendered his ship, an example soon followed by the rest of the squadron, with the exception of the galleys, which had sometime before began a rapid retreat. An order was now given by McDonough for their pursuit, but his own and other vessels being reported "in a sinking condition," the order was recalled, and the chase discontinued.

During the occurrence of the preceding events, the British General, who began his bombardment of the American redoubts as soon as the fleets were engaged, made several efforts to cross the river, ascend the height, and assail the works on its summit; but failing in all—repulsed from the ford by the troops of the line, and from the upper bridge, by the militia—the fire from his batteries silenced by that of the redoubts, and the British flag lowered to the stars and stripes of the union, Prevost came at once to the conclusion that the principal object of the enterprise being lost, a longer continuance of the contest for the town, would be a wanton sacrifice of human life, forbidden alike by his own feelings, and by the spirit of the orders under which he was acting. In this humane view of the case, the troops were promptly recalled from their advanced positions, and ordered to prepare for a *speedy* retreat to Canada—an order so literally executed by the Wellington elite, that, as General Macomb informs us, they had actually completed eight miles of their retrograde march before their flight was either discovered or suspected by the American army or its outposts.

Remarks. 1st. The selection made of Schlosser, as a military depot, was ill-judged; and the defenceless

condition in which it was left, when the campaign began, was an error of no small magnitude; for had Drummond availed himself of it, his adversary's career must have stopped at Fort Erie, with the additional discredit of a hasty and compulsory retreat from Canada. Fortunately, the British General was ignorant of facts he ought to have known, or knowing them, failed to put a just estimate on their value, and, accordingly, instead of pushing forward his detachment on Schlosser, he gave to it the comparatively useless destination of Fort Niagara. Among the rules of war applicable to the selection of sites for magazines, the maxims of Frederick furnish two, having a direct bearing on the present case, namely, "Never place your depot between yourself and your enemy;" and again, "When manœuvring on his position, whether for purposes of demonstration or attack, never do so in a way that will enable him to strike at your magazines, or otherwise embarrass your communication with them."

2d. When, on his arrival at Chippewa, General Brown found himself insulted by a picket war, three orders instead of two ought to have been given: one to Porter, to throw himself in the rear of the British pickets; a second to Ripley, to follow in Porter's steps, and at such distance as would at all times enable him to sustain the movement; and a third to Scott, to cross the bridge, watch Rial, and, should the march of this officer indicate an intention of withdrawing or supporting his pickets, in either case to attack him promptly and vigorously. These orders, if well executed, would

have prevented the retreat of Porter's militia, and have brought into the field the second brigade, at such time and place as would have enabled it to attack Rial's right, while Scott was intrepidly assailing his left; circumstances which, if we consider what actually occurred, will fairly justify the inference that, had the force of both brigades been concentrated on Rial's line, the *first* battle of the campaign would have been the *last;* securing to the arms of the United States a decided and permanent ascendency on the strait.

3d. When the engineers reported, that, with a small degree of labor, the division could be so placed as would enable it either to turn or to attack the enemy's intrenched camp, the General should have immediately adopted the first of these alternatives, and seizing some strategic point commanding the communication between Rial's position and his base, compelled that General to forego the advantages of his redoubts and intrenchments, and risk a battle on ground chosen by his enemy. The time lost, in preparing for a double attack on the British camp, deprived us of this advantage, and enabled Rial, by a prompt abandonment of his post, to save his army, reinforce the garrison at Fort George, and take a new and safer position at Twenty-Mile creek.

4th. Finding, on his arrival at Queenstown, that the facts stated in relation to Rial's movement were sufficiently ascertained, General Brown's first intention was to follow up the blows already given, and thus compel the enemy to risk another conflict, or, to avoid this, to recur to a third and hasty retreat. This inten-

tion was, however, soon and fortunately yielded to considerations which should never be overlooked by a commanding General. Such, in the present case, were: the high degree of improbability that a march, however carefully conducted, could be made through an enemy's country without discovery; the certainty, that, if discovered, the British General would immediately shelter himself behind the intrenchments of Fort George, or the heights of Burlington; and the doubtful policy of any measure that would drive him to either of these places; inasmuch as the effect would be to strengthen points which (if our fleet should ever be ready to take part in the campaign) would form our most prominent objects of attack.

5th. When, on the 25th, General Brown found his depot jeoparded, and himself not in condition to sustain it directly, the expedient he adopted was no doubt proper, presenting, as it did, a probability, that, finding the war carried home to his own posts, Drummond would, for their defence, recall the detachment made on Buffalo. But to this order ought to have been added another, directing Ripley and Porter to follow and sustain Scott, with all the force that could be spared from the camp. As the affair was managed, the battle of Bridgewater, like that of Chippewa, was fought by *detachments*, and had, of course, the doubtful issue which generally characterizes such combats. "An army," says Napoleon, "fought by divisions, brigades, or regiments, in succession, must fail, if opposed by an enemy who understands his business. How often are great battles retrieved and won by the arrival of even

small reinforcements? When, therefore, you either expect an attack or intend to make one, *assemble your whole force*, and *employ it simultaneously*, remembering, that the great secret of obtaining a victory, is *in concentrating the greater power, moral and physical, on the lesser*." Frederick's maxim on the subject, is equally clear and authoritative: "When acting offensively, never make a detachment." An ancient rule of the art was, that he who divides his force will be beaten. "Cette regle est si bien constatée, que tous les Generaux qui y ont manqué, s'ent sont presque toujours trouvés mal." If such views had governed in the affair of Bridgewater, would the trophies won on that occasion have been lost? or would the question be yet unsettled, to which of the two armies the victory belonged?

6th. When, after the battle, it was discovered, that the nine pieces of ordnance, captured from the enemy, could not be removed with the troops, General Ripley, then commanding officer, should have immediately given orders for *disabling* them (breaking down their carriages and knocking off their trunnions). Had this been done, beside settling the question who had won the battle, it would have greatly paralyzed the subsequent movements of the enemy, and entirely prevented the hasty and ill-judged abandonment of the strong position at Chippewa, made on a vague report, that "Drummond was rapidly approaching, and would soon attack the American camp." Again: when a report is made of the actual or intended approach of an enemy for the purpose of attack, our first duty is to ascertain

the truth or falsehood of the report, and govern ourselves accordingly; since, without taking this precaution, we may yield to a ruse, which a short and active reconnoissance would have immediately defeated. From inattention to this common-sense rule, a retreat to Erie was not only ordered and executed, but made with a haste and disorder, tending greatly to demoralize the troops, and by no means calculated to increase their confidence in the General's qualifications for commanding an army. The subsequent events of the campaign at Fort Erie, give no room for criticism. Gaines's defence of that post, was skilful and brave; and Brown's sortie, as well in plan as in execution and effect, the most brilliant coup de main of the war.

7th. Though the general tendency to error, in the measures pursued by General Izzard, may have been sufficiently indicated in the preceding narrative, still, as there were circumstances in the conduct of that officer yet unnoticed, and which, for the purposes of history, ought not to be concealed, we hasten to offer a brief detail of them; and the more readily, as, in our opinion, the development will leave no doubt on the questions not unfrequently asked, whether, during the campaign of 1814, the General fulfilled his promise of "doing as well as he knew how;" or whether, throughout the whole of it, it had not been his constant endeavor, to defeat every project prescribed to him by the war department.

Suspecting, early in May, that the naval means given to Captain McDonough, for obtaining an ascendency on Lake Champlain, would be found incompetent to

their object, the Secretary of War, on the 25th of that month, directed General Izzard "to seize *Rouse's Point*, and plant upon it a heavy battery; which, with the aid of McDonough's fleet, would put us at ease with regard to our magazines, enable us to concentrate our force, and, with the exception of the men necessary to manage the battery, render the whole of it disposable." On the — of June, this order was renewed in the following words: "A post on Lake Champlain, adapted to the purposes of co-operating with and covering our fleet on that lake, and of excluding therefrom the enemy's flotilla, will be immediately selected, established, and garrisoned." Again, on the 30th of June, the Secretary adds: "I send enclosed a letter, from Captain McDonough to the Secretary of the Navy, suggesting an addition to the fleet, or, as a substitute therefor, the erection of a *battery on the Narrows;* which, in addition to his own means, will shut the enemy out of the lake. If it be determined, as I think it will, that no augmentation be made to the fleet, the alternative of *fortifying will necessarily be imposed upon us;* and, possibly, to an extent beyond any of our past calculations. I suggest this last idea, that your requisitions on the ordnance department, may be commensurate with the wants of the service." And lastly, on July the 2d, the General is thus instructed: "I yesterday saw the Secretary of the Navy, and received from him an explicit declaration, that he would not add to the naval means on Lake Champlain, as suggested by Captain McDonough, in his letters of the 8th and

11th ultimo. We are therefore driven, by *necessity, to fortify on the Narrows.*"

To these multiplied expressions of the Executive will, no answer directly declaring an intention of either obeying, or disobeying, the injunctions they contained, was received from the General, till about the middle of July, when a letter dated on the 12th of that month, announcing at once his opinions and determination on the subject, was received by the war department. In this, he says: "Rouse's Point has been long an object of my attention. It is admirably situated for the establishment of a heavy battery, which would command the passage of the lake at its narrowest part; but *there is not room for defensive works in its rear*, and its *immediate vicinity to the enemy's principal post, at La Cole*, (now surrounded by intrenchments,) *would make its occupation very hazardous.* The question next lay *between Point aux Roches and Cumberland Head.* I have decided in favor of the latter."

It cannot fail to astonish any intelligent man acquainted with the topography of Lake Champlain, and the relative condition of the belligerant armies, at the date of these orders, that General Izzard should have hesitated a single moment in occupying Rouse's Point; a stragetic position which, by his own unqualified acknowledgment, was "admirably situated for a heavy battery, giving a complete command of the Narrows of Lake Champlain," and thus enabling him to exclude the British fleet entirely from the lower and wider part of the lake. Nor would the inquirer be less astonished, on finding that *Cumberland Head*, the site which

the General had selected, instead of Rouse's Point, possessed no similar advantage; but, on the contrary, left open a passage for the enemy, which could neither be wholly closed nor even partially obstructed, and which, of course, made necessary a hard-fought naval battle, to secure to McDonough the ascendency indispensable to the safety of our magazines and movements during the campaign.

In justification of conduct so extraordinary, the General hazarded two reasons, not less censurable than the conduct itself; the one, notoriously founded in *fiction*, and the other, in *fright*. What higher evidence can be required that there was no want of room in the rear of Rouse's Point for defensive works, as alleged by the General, than the well-known fact, that this very point was subsequently selected by the government, as the site of a great national fortress, and was only abandoned, because found to be a mile or two north of our territorial boundary? Again, who, excepting the General himself, of the six thousand men composing the division of the right, ever believed there was anything arising from either the vicinity or character of La Cole mill and its intrenchments, to make hazardous the occupation of Rouse's Point? The very suggestion is a libel upon a corps, among the most gallant and efficient in the war.

The cause of this ill-judged and insubordinate conduct on the part of the General, continued to be problematical till about the middle of August, when the secret was accidentally revealed, that the General had been able, through the patronage of the Secretary of

State, to obtain the President's approbation of what he had done, or omitted to do, in relation to the selection of a site for a fortification, which should have the effect of excluding the enemy's fleet from Lake Champlain, or, in other words, for entirely disregarding the repeated and urgent orders given on that subject by the Secretary of War. Of this authorization, we need not point out the errors, as regarded the influence it would probably have on the future conduct of the person to whom it was given, or on that of others who might become acquainted with it; it may not, however, be useless to remark, that the secrecy with which it was made and exercised was probably its worst effect, inasmuch as it prevented the correction of the evil, until it became incurable. What would have been the effect of a prompt and full declaration of it, on the General's credit, for either local knowledge or professional judgement, will be sufficiently seen in the contents of the following letters, written by two distinguished officers of the U. S. engineer corps.

General Swift to General Armstrong, 5th of August, 1838:—

"In my opinion, with the force under the command of General Izzard, a *position* in the vicinity of *Rouse's Point, could have been occupied, so as to control the enemy's fleet in passing through the Narrows, more effectually, than from any other position.* La Cole mill formed no sufficient objection to the occupancy of Rouse's Point. A *battery on Cumberland Head* could not have prevented the passage of an enemy's fleet into

Lake Champlain, unless by some error on the part of the naval commander."

Colonel Totten to General Armstrong, 8th of August, 1838:—

"*There was ground enough in the rear of Rouse's Point* for small works, and for *such as would, with an adequate garrison, defend the position against great enterprises, and even a siege. Having no faith in the power of any works on Cumberland Head, capable of impeding or materially injuring a passing squadron, I felt bound in conscience to state my views to the General, but though my opposition was earnest, it was in vain.* I do not now see, and never have supposed, that there was anything in *the vicinity of La Cole mill, or in the character of its garrison, to render the occupation of Rouse's Point hazardous to our army.*

CHAPTER V.

Predatory warfare on the Chesapeake and Potomac resumed.—Defensive means employed by the United States.—Arrival of Vice-Admiral Cochrane with a large armament, naval and military, in Lynnhaven bay.—Movements on the Patuxent.—Battle of Bladensburgh.—Defeat of Winder.—Capitol and other buildings burnt.—Fort Washington abandoned.—Capitulation of Alexandria.—Events in the east.

FINDING nothing in the plunder acquired on the coast of North Carolina either rich or rare, Cockburn speedily returned to Chesapeake bay; where, resuming his predatory system, he visited, in succession, Nonsing ferry, Matchedoc, Wicomico, St. Clement, Coon river, Marlborough, and St. Mary's—carrying off all the tobacco, grain, flour, household furniture, negroes, and bay or river craft, he could find; after which, the better to illustrate his labors, he set fire to the houses of such of the inhabitants as showed any disposition to defend their property.[1]

Selecting, soon after, the shores of the Patuxent, as a new theatre for similar exploits, he pushed forward his gun-boats and barges into that river; when, somewhat to his surprise, and still more to his disappoint-

[1] Cockburn's official reports from the 1st of June to the 15th of August, both days included.—*Historical Register*, p. 123, vol. 4.

ment, he found himself opposed by a bold and practical seaman, who, recently placed in the command of a small flotilla of armed vessels, had already handled roughly a portion of his small craft, and, on more than one occasion, set at defiance even the brigs and frigates of his Britannic majesty.[1] Audacity like this, so affrontful to the British flag, and so little favorable to the rear-admiral's pecuniary views, could neither be overlooked nor pardoned; and hence it was, that, on Cochrane's arrival in the Chesapeake, the punishment of Barney, and the destruction of his flotilla, became the first object of the campaign.[2]

After detaching two small squadrons for purposes of demonstration, one in the direction of Baltimore, and another in that of Fort Washington, what remained of the armament, naval and military, ascended the Patuxent as high as Benedict, where the seamen and marines assigned to the water attack, were placed in boats, barges, and schooners; while the army, debarked on the southern bank of the river, began a covering march, *pari passu* with the ascending vessels. From causes, indicated alike by professional precaution, the extreme heat of the weather, and the debilitated state of the troops,[3] the progress made by the assailants was uncommonly slow; nor was it till the evening of the 21st

[1] Barney's reports from the 1st to the 26th of June, 1814.—*Historical Register.* p. 117, vol. 4.

[2] British campaigns at Washington, &c., p. 99.

[3] "During this short march of six miles, a greater number of soldiers dropped out of the ranks, and fell behind from fatigue, than I recollect to have seen in any march in the peninsula, of thrice its duration."—*Idem*, p. 102.

of August, that the army reached Nottingham. Informed here, that their object of attack had taken a position higher up the river, and now lay at anchor off Pig's Point, the chase was renewed in the morning of the 22d; when it was soon after discovered, that the flotilla, abandoned by Barney and his seamen, was now enveloped in flames.[1]

Cockburn, finding his first and great object, thus quickly and cheaply obtained, lost no time in visiting Ross, and suggesting to him the adoption of another. The argument employed to obtain the General's concurrence, was substantially as follows:—"Our antagonist, from deficiency of force, or want of confidence in what he has, having hitherto shown no disposition to obstruct our views, and having at last blown up his flotilla, which, if well fought, might have cost us many lives—may we not fairly conclude, that his defence of Washington will not be more vigorous? And if so, has not the condition on which we are permitted to attack that town arisen? It is true that Washington presents no object strictly military—a navy-yard comparatively empty, and a small and poor population—but we must not forget that inconsiderable in this view as it may be, it is the metropolis of the nation, and that names, as well in war as in peace, do much. By capturing it, we shall give no small *éclât* to our arms abroad; and to ourselves, a more solid gratification, if the government, to save the city, be disposed to make a liberal donation of their money."[2]

[1] Appendix, No. 23.

[2] Statement made by Dr. Thornton, of the reasoning which in-

It can scarcely be supposed, that a dashing Irish General, who had acquired his morals as well as his tactics, in the Spanish war, would hesitate in adopting a project, addressed alike to his pride and his poverty. The arrangement was accordingly soon made; leaving behind a naval officer, and a party of seamen, to ship tobacco and other plunder at and near Marlborough, Ross and Cockburn, at the head of a column of three thousand five hundred combatants,[1] unencumbered with baggage, and carrying with them only two 3-pounders, dragged by seamen, and three days' provision on their backs, began a march in the evening of the 22d on Washington.

At this stage of our story, it becomes proper that we should no longer be silent with regard to the means of defence, prescribed by the President for the safety of the city and district. Officially informed on the 26th of June, of the pacification in Europe, and aware of the great disposable force, this event would give to Great Britain, in prosecuting her contest with the United States, the heads of departments, and the Attorney General, were convened on the 1st of July, for purposes of consultation; when it was decided—

1st. That ten or twelve thousand draughts, from the militia of Pennsylvania, Maryland, and Virginia, should be held in reserve in their respective States, ready to march at a moment's warning.

duced an attack on Washington, as declared to him by the naval commander.

[1] Dr. Catlett's estimate of the number of the British army.—*See Appendix, No.* 24.

2d. That not less than two, nor more than three thousand of the afore-mentioned draughts, should be assembled for immediate service, at some central point between the Potomac and Baltimore. And,

3d. That the militia of the district of Columbia, forming two brigades, the 36th United States regiment of infantry, one battalion of the 38th, two companies of the 10th, one company of the 12th, two troops of regular dragoons, two companies of fencibles, and one hundred marines—making an aggregate of three thousand combatants—should constitute a corps at all times disposable, under the direction of the commanding General.

Nor will it appear from the report made by the congressional Committee of Inquiry, that any time was lost in giving effect to these measures, so far as their execution depended on the War Department. "On the 2d of July," says the report, "the tenth military district was constituted, and the command given to General Winder. On the 4th, a requisition on the States for 93,500 men was issued; on the 14th, the Governors of Pennsylvania and Virginia, acknowledged the receipt of the requisition, and promised promptitude. On the 10th, the Governor of Maryland was served with a copy of the requisition, and took measures to comply with it. On the 12th, Gen. Winder was authorized, in case of either *menaced* or *actual invasion*, to call into service the whole of the Maryland quota (6,000 men); and, on the 18th, 5,000 from Pennsylvania, and 2,000 from Virginia; making an aggregate (the regular infantry and cavalry, marines,

flotilla men, and district militia included) of *sixteen thousand six hundred men.* Such was the measure of defence designated for military district No. 10, and such the measures taken by the War Department for assembling it, up to the 18th of July," twenty-six days before the enemy's approach to the capitol.[1]

It is not, however, to be dissembled, that much of this force, from causes to be hereafter stated, was not found on the field of battle. As early as the 13th of August, the General having doubts whether the draughts made on Maryland for half her quota, would not be nearly a total failure, the Secretary of War, to supply the deficiency, adopted the expedient of accepting, as part of the six thousand men required from that State, such corps of militia, as were already organized and in service under State authority; which, with a number of volunteers, brought out by the exigence, had the effect of giving, in rank and file, on the 24th of August, six thousand three hundred and twenty-six combatants.[2]

Of this force about one half was, on that day, stationed in or near Bladensburgh, to guard the approach by that route to the city; while the other moiety occupied a position on the southern end of the Eastern branch bridge; on the supposition, that "the enemy's first attack would be made on Fort Washington, in conjunction with Gordon's squadron, then ascending

[1] Report of the Committee of Inquiry, p. 38.

[2] Pages 35 and 36, Report of the Committee of Inquiry. The deduction made by the committee for detachments left at the Eastern branch bridge is much over-rated.

the Potomac." This ill-founded opinion was fortunately corrected, about 10 o'clock of the 24th, furnishing, however, barely time to unite the two brigades, when the head of the British column was seen fast approaching the village.[1]

Ross's decision was soon taken; finding little in the appearance of his enemy to inspire respect, and bred up in a school in which audacity was generally found to be wisdom, he at once made a rush at the head of his elite, not exceeding fifteen hundred combatants;[2] crossed the bridge which his adversary had forgotten to destroy or obstruct; threw out a few sharp-shooters and rocket-men on his flanks; directed his column of attack on the American batteries; and, in a period of time almost incredibly short, succeeded in putting to rout the whole of Winder's first line; after which, all further contest on our part being thought hopeless, a general retreat was ordered.

No immediate pursuit was either made or intended by Ross—the effect of two causes—his hopes from negotiation, as already suggested, and the exhaustion and absence of a large part of his army.[3] Two hours were accordingly given for the arrival of the absent, and the refreshment of all; when the march was resumed, and continued till within a mile and a half of the capitol. At this point, being sufficiently assured of Winder's retreat to Georgetown, orders were issued

[1] Winder's report.

[2] Cockburn's official report of the action.

[3] For the condition of the British army, before arriving at Bladensburgh, see Appendix, No. 25.

for bivouacking the troops for the night; while the two commanders, naval and military, accompanied by a small escort, not exceeding two hundred men, entered the city, visited the public buildings, set a price on their ransom, and detached an agent to open a negotiation with some competent American authority, on the subject.[1] The return of the messenger with a rejection of the terms, became the signal for destruction; when every national building, excepting the postoffice, was speedily consumed. The greater part of the 25th was employed in carrying out this policy at the navy-yard, Greenleaf's point, and the Potomac bridge; after which, a retreat, under many precautions, was begun in the night, and, with the exception of a few pauses, continued till the 27th, when the troops arrived at Nottingham. The 28th being employed in removing the wounded, the artillery, and the plunder, and the 29th in resuming their former position at Benedict; they were soon after embarked and carried to the shipping.

It has been already stated, that, when Ross and Cockburn began their expedition on Barney's flotilla, two naval demonstrations were deemed necessary—one in the direction of Baltimore, the other in that of Washington—for the obvious purpose of preventing any part of the force assembled at either place from aiding in the defence of Barney. Sir Peter Parker, to whom the command of the vessels ascending the Ches-

[1] The only American having any connexion with this negotiation, was Dr. Thornton, as the facts were reported to us. Of the proposition itself, the President spoke with becoming contempt.

apeake had been given, being informed, while lying off Waltham farm, that a body of militia had assembled in the neighbourhood, he hastily determined to carry the camp by a night attack, and, with this view, debarked about two hundred men in the evening of the 29th of August. The movement, though made with much circumspection, could not entirely escape the vigilance of the American commander, whose patrols soon discovered and speedily reported the landing of the party, and the direction given to their march. Instead, therefore, of finding, as he had expected, the militia either scattered or asleep, Sir Peter found them carefully imbodied, strongly posted, and wide awake. After a moment's pause, the attack was directed on the centre of the American line, but, failing to make any serious impression upon it, was soon extended to the flanks, when, the firing becoming general, two effects were produced—an exhaustion, nearly total, of ammunition on the part of the militia; and on that of the seamen, the loss of their gallant leader—circumstances inducing a retreat, nearly simultaneous, of both parties.[1]

Captain Gordon, who commanded the Potomac squadron, was more fortunate. Beginning his movement on the 17th, under orders "to ascend the river as high as Fort Washington, and try upon it the *experiment* of a bombardment," he, on the 27th, reached the

[1] "The enemy's loss, 1 midshipman and 8 seamen and marines left dead on the field; 9 wounded, six of whom died in a few hours. Sir Peter Parker mortally wounded, died before he reached the barges. Not one of our men was killed, and but three wounded. Want of ammunition alone saved the enemy from capture or destruction."—*Colonel Reed's Report.*

neighborhood of that post, when, after discharging a single shell, doing no injury to either the fort or its garrison, the latter was found to be rapidly retreating. Thus promptly anticipated in the accomplishment of his object, the captain brought up his squadron in front of Alexandria, where, on the 29th, he prescribed the only terms on which the city could be saved from plunder and destruction.[1]

It will not be thought extraordinary, that, in choosing between total and partial ruin, there should be little if any hesitation on the part of a defenceless town, the male population of which did not then exceed one hundred combatants. Gordon's terms, though hard and humiliating, were accordingly speedily accepted, and would no doubt have been rigidly enforced, had not the discretion of that officer, getting the better of his rapacity, admonished him of the danger of continuing longer in a position, necessarily exposing his retreat to many physical embarrassments, to which might soon be added others of a more menacing character—hot shot on his flanks, and fire-ships on his rear. Under these views of the case, the British commander ameliorated his conditions, and contenting himself with such booty as could be most promptly transported, began his retreat on the 3d of September, and, though actually encountering much of the danger he had anticipated,[2] was able on the 9th, by a combination of skill, diligence, and good fortune, to anchor securely his whole

1 Gordon's Terms. See Appendix No. 26.

2 Reports of Commodore Porter, Perry, and Rodgers. His. Register, pp. 165—176, vol 4.

squadron, with twenty-one prize-vessels laden with booty.

The speedy and successful issue of the attacks made on Washington and Alexandria, could not fail to suggest a similar enterprise on Baltimore, and the less so, as the approaching stormy season made an immediate prosecution of any more important object unsafe for both fleet and army. This new project was therefore promptly adopted, and means taken to give it a speedy and successful execution. On the 10th, a large portion of the fleet, carrying with it the army, now increased to six thousand combatants, began its movement up the Chesapeake, and on the 11th, presented itself off the mouth of the Petapsco. Early on the 12th, the troops were landed at North Point, while the frigates and bomb-ketches ascended the river and took such positions as would best enable them to sustain the intended attack on the city.

Ross, who knew well the value of moments in the discharge of military duty, lost no time in seeking his enemy, and approaching his object. Meeting, after a rapid march in the morning of the 12th, an advanced party of the city militia, he hastened to put it to flight, when a skirmish ensued, which, though of small importance in other respects, was marked by a circumstance, having a powerful influence on the character and issue of the expedition. It will readily occur to the reader, that, in making this statement, we allude to the death of the British commander, who, in the constant habit of leading his attacks, and thus giving to his columns the impulse of his own chivalrous excite-

ment, had, on this occasion, driven from a covering of sedge and underwood, a few militia riflemen, one of whom firing upon him, inflicted a wound which in a few minutes terminated his life and his labors.

The command of the army, now devolving on Col. Brooke, of the 44th British regiment, the march was resumed, and a battle fought, of one hour and twenty minutes' continuance, much to the credit of General Stricker and his militia, if we take into consideration the relative strength of the combatants—which, in point of number, was as *six* to *three* in favor of the enemy. Stricker's retreat being undisturbed by Brooke, was made in good order to a position one mile and a half from the city; where the brigade bivouacked for the night.

During the occurrence of these events, Vice-Admiral Cochrane, who had taken on himself the direction of the naval attack, was busily employed in testing the capacity of bombs and rockets, in reducing forts and batteries. Ascending, as already stated, the Patapsco, with a fleet of frigates, rocket and bomb-ketches, and anchoring these at the prudent distance of two miles from the guns of his enemy, he began a bombardment on Fort McHenry, which lasted twenty-five hours. During this attack, he threw fifteen hundred shells; four hundred of which exploded within the walls of the fort; but without making any unfavorable impression on either the strength of the work, or the spirit of the garrison;[1] a fact which, added to that of the fate

[1] The defence of the fort was under the immediate direction of

of Ross, soon brought the Admiral to the conclusion, that "the *demonstration*," as he called it, "had been carried sufficiently far," and that his Britannic Majesty's interests would be best promoted by withdrawing both fleet and army, and descending the bay to their former station.[1]

Brooke, who, after his combat of the preceding day, had cautiously followed in the track of Stricker, had now gained a position, which gave him a distinct view of Chincapin Hill, and a chain of redoubts and intrenchments, abundantly supplied with cannon, and bristling with bayonets;[2] which had no tendency to lessen his respect for the opinion of the Vice-Admiral—to which he promptly subscribed; and availing himself accordingly of a dark night, and a heavy rain, began and accomplished a retreat of twelve miles to the neighborhood of North Point; where the army was again taken on board the shipping. This movement not having been discovered by the besieged, till after daylight, no pursuit of the enemy could be successfully made.

While the preceding events took place in the south, others not wholly unworthy of notice, occurred in the east. In despite of the coquetry which had hitherto

the late gallant Colonel George Armistead of the U. S. corps of artillery.

[1] Cochrane's official report.

[2] The veteran who had superseded Gen. Winder, in the command of the district, knew well the value of defensive works, and was careful to supply them. It will not be forgotten, that the distinguished officer to whom we allude, was the late General S. Smith, of Baltimore.

existed between British authorities and our eastern Magi,[1] fleets were assigned, early in the spring, for blockading the ports of New York, New London, and Boston; and for inflicting on smaller seacoast establishments such chastisement, as, in the opinion of the commanding naval officer, might be deemed advisable. In the exercise of this discretionary authority, two launches, and four barges, strongly manned and armed, entered the river Connecticut, on the 7th of April, and ascending as high as Petty Paugh point, destroyed four ships, as many brigs, and nine smaller vessels. Visits of similar character were soon after made to Wareham and Scituate, in Massachusetts; where several vessels were burnt, and other outrages committed.

Admonished by these repeated acts of hostility, directed on small trading towns wholly unprepared for defence, the inhabitants of Stonington wisely determined to construct a battery, equip it with ordnance and ammunition, and place in it a few volunteers, on whose fidelity and courage, they could entirely rely. This measure, though obviously one merely of precaution, was not regarded as such, by the senior naval officer on the station. Affecting to see in it, not only intentions of ordinary hostility, but projects the most malignant and barbarous[2] in relation to the squadron he commanded, Sir T. Hardy hastened to present himself and a number of armed vessels, in front of the town; making three demands upon it: 1st, that the

[1] See Sherbrook's proclamations.

[2] Torpedo attacks.

family of Mr. Stewart[1] be speedily removed on board of the shipping; 2d, that the fort be immediately dismantled; and, 3d, that no torpedo be either made, kept, or used by the inhabitants;" to which was added a menace, "that if not complied with, the town should be destroyed." After due consideration, (in concert with Brigadier-General Cushing of the United States army, commanding the district,) the following determination was manfully taken—that "No. 1 of the demands, be referred for decision to the national government; and that Nos. 2 and 3, be peremptorily rejected—inasmuch as to dismantle a fort, or to limit ourselves in the use of weapons, on the mandate of an enemy, would be degrading to the American character, and unwise, as regards our peculiar interests."[2]

It will be readily supposed, that, on receiving an answer so entirely unexpected, Sir Thomas would not be slow in trying the effect of his professional persuaders—balls, shells, and rockets, in reconciling the population of a small trading village, to the terms he had offered. Positions, proper for the purpose, were accordingly given to the ships, when a cannonade and bombardment, accompanied by showers of rockets, opened on the town and battery, and continued without remission for several hours of the 9th and 10th; when finding the attack hopeless, and some of his vessels not uninjured, the British commander weighed his anchors, spread his sails, and withdrew from the harbor. "Such," says General Cushing, "was the issue of a conflict

[1] A British consul whose family resided at Stonington.

[2] See Gen. Cushing's letter to the Secretary of War.

between a land battery, fighting only *three* guns, and a number of armed vessels, fighting more than *one hundred!* What a lesson of encouragement to us, and of discouragement to the enemy."[1]

The time had however arrived, when operations of this kind were to give place to others of more ambitious character; when, in a word, a war of conquest was to be substituted, for one of pillage and destruction. In pursuance of this new system, a fleet and army were put at the disposal of General Sir J. Sherbroke and Admiral Griffith, with orders "to overrun and subjugate all that part of Massachusetts Bay lying on the eastern side of Penobscot river." Nor will the wisdom of this selection be questioned, when we add, that the entire purpose of the campaign was accomplished, with little if any loss, within the short term of a few weeks; Eastport, Castine, and Machias, falling in succession, without resistance. Encouraged by these successes to enter the interior and complete the conquest, the British commander was preparing to do so, when General Brewster (acting under state authority) made a formal surrender of the whole territory, to the arms and dominion of his Britannic majesty![2]

[1] Gen. Cushing's second letter to the Secretary of War of the 10th of August, 1814. See also his public letter of the same date.

[2] "I beg leave to congratulate you on this important accession of territory, which has been wrested from the enemy. It embraces one hundred miles of seacoast, and includes that intermediate tract of country separating the province of New Brunswick from Lower Canada. We have taken twenty-six pieces of ordnance, &c., and I have the pleasure to add, that this service has been effected without the loss of a man, on our part."—*A Pilkington's official report*

REMARKS. The error of first occurrence in this campaign, belongs exclusively to the administration; and will be found, in the selection made of a commanding General, not on the ground of distinguished professional service or knowledge, but simply on a presumption, that, "being a native of Maryland, and a relative of the governor, Brigadier Winder would be useful in mitigating the opposition to the war, and in giving an increased efficiency to national measures, within the limits of the state;"—an opinion which, though somewhat plausible, was wholly unsustained by the event.[1]

2d. The first duty assigned to this officer, under his new appointment, was to select a central point between the Potomac and Baltimore, for the rendezvous and encampment of two or three thousand militia draughts, to be called into immediate service. It was not, however, till the 16th of July, that anything having relation to this object was received from him; and what he then offered, was of so undecided a character, as, in his own opinion, made necessary another and careful examination.[2] Of this new labor and its result, no re-

to Lieutenant-General Sir John Sherbroke, dated 14th of September, 1814, *Machias.*

[1] The person recommended by the Secretary of War for this appointment, was Brigadier-General Moses Porter, then at Norfolk, whose whole life may be said to have been military. Entering the army of the revolution a boy, he had, by uniform good conduct, risen through every rank, from that of a private to the command of a brigade. No objection to General Winder, excepting a *want of military experience*, either was, or could be made; his patriotism and courage had been already tested, and were generally acknowledged.

[2] Winder's official report.

port was made till the 23d; when, somewhat to the surprise of the cabinet, *Bladensburgh* was announced as the site, chosen for a *central* camp between *Baltimore and the Potomac!*

3d. In the next experiment made of the General's executive powers, they were not found to be more successful in *procuring militia*, than they had been in selecting a *place*, proper for its rendezvous and encampment. On the 12th of July, he had been authorized to call from Maryland the whole of her quota, (6,000 men,) and on the 16th he reported, that "the governor and council had taken the necessary steps for immediately complying with the requisition." On the 20th, he says: "I have seized a moment to visit Annapolis, and arrange the calling of the Maryland militia; this will be immediately complied with by the governor." On the 23d, he adds: "The governor has issued orders for calling three thousand militia to form the camp at Bladensburgh," yet, on the 13th of August, he discovers that the governor's call would prove nearly abortive; as, instead of giving three thousand men, "it would not bring together more than *three hundred*."[1]

What, it may be asked, under a failure so menacing, on the part of Maryland, was the obvious duty of the General? Unquestionably to call, without losing a moment, on the states of Pennsylvania and Virginia, for their several quotas. Such, however, was not the course adopted. No demand for troops was made on the former, till the 18th of August; and then, instead of calling for *five thousand men*, the requisition was

[1] Winder's letter of the 13th of August.

limited to *five hundred.* The call on Virginia was not more prompt, being also deferred till the 18th; when, like that on Pennsylvania, it failed "from *a want of notice seasonably given.*"

4th. Nor was the General's conduct different in relation to corps actually under arms and awaiting his orders. Stansbury's brigade, though called from Baltimore on the 20th, was halted for two days on the road, from an apprehension that, "if permitted to come on, he would arrive too soon." Sterret's detachment, called also on the 20th, was ordered to halt at Snowden's till otherwise directed. Hood's regiment, taken into service about the middle of August, was left at Annapolis till the 23d, from a belief that that city formed the enemy's point of attack.[1] When on the 22d a retreat was ordered, for the purpose of assembling his whole force, unfortunately the motive for making it was forgotten, the General neither joining Stansbury at Bladensburgh, nor suffering Stansbury to join him at the Eastern-branch bridge; thus directly exposing both corps to be beaten in succession. Young's brigade, withdrawn by the General's order, from the covering position it held in the rear of Fort Washington, was, on the 24th, ordered to cross the Potomac; whence it followed that its service was lost at both points—at Bladensburgh in the battle, and at Fort Washington, when Gordon's squadron appeared before it.[2] Minor's regiment arriving late on the 23d at Washington, was stationed by the General on Capitol Hill early on the

[1] Stansbury's Report.

[2] Young's Report, No. 27 of the Appendix.

24th, with orders "there to await his farther direction," which being altogether omitted, had, as in the case of Young's brigade, the effect of keeping it some miles distant from the army and the action. Again: though, in the morning of the 24th, expecting every moment an attack at the Eastern-branch bridge, the General gravely proposed detaching from his effective force, Barney's corps of six or eight hundred men, to Greenleaf's point and the navy-yard—places remote from each other, and having no direct bearing on the defence of the city; and where, had his proposal been approved, they must have fallen uselessly, and the battle at Bladensburgh been deprived of the only circumstance in it, creditable to the arms and consolatory to the pride of the nation. Nor was this all; for though assured, at 10 o'clock, A. M., of the 24th, that Ross was marching directly on Bladensburgh with his whole force, and that Stansbury's brigade, unless speedily reinforced, would be utterly unable to withstand the approaching attack, it was not till 11 o'clock that any order was given to Smith's corps to sustain it;[1] and to render still more striking the indecision, Barney, and his seamen and marines, were left behind at the special request of the General, to explode a few barrels of gunpowder, placed under the Eastern-branch bridge, should Ross's movement on Bladensburgh turn out to be a ruse.[2]

Having thus detailed such acts of the General as directly tended to lessen his means of defending the city, we now proceed to show the use made of those

[1] Smith's Report to the Committee of Inquiry.
[2] Idem.

he had, when, at 12 o'clock, he determined to risk a field fight with his adversary. And, in performing this duty, the better to avoid injustice to all concerned, we shall make the principal actors in the scene, the expositors of the story.

"The two brigades," says the commanding General, "being united about 12 o'clock, of the 24th, the enemy was seen rapidly descending from Lownd's hill into the village; when an order was given to the advanced artillery to open a fire upon him, which occasioned the head of the column to leave the street, and to creep down under the cover of houses and trees in loose order, so as not to expose themselves to risk from our shot. It was, therefore, only occasionally that an object presented, at which our artillery could fire. In this sort of suspension, the enemy began to throw his rockets, and his light troops to accumulate down in the lower parts of the town and near the bridge, but principally covered from view by the houses. Their light troops, however, soon began to issue out, and press across the creek, which was fordable, and, in most places, lined with bushes and trees, which were sufficient to conceal the movements of light troops, who act in the manner of theirs, singly. Our advanced riflemen now began to fire, and continued it for half a dozen rounds, when I observed them to run back to the skirts of the orchard on the left, where they became invisible—the boughs of the orchard-trees concealing their original position, as also that of the artillery, from view. A retreat of twenty or thirty yards from their original position toward the left, brought them in view on the edge of the

orchard, where they halted, and seemed about returning to their position, but in a few minutes entirely broke, and retired to the left of Stansbury's line. I immediately ordered the 5th Baltimore regiment to advance and sustain the artillery. They promptly commenced this movement; but the rockets which had, for the first three or four, passed very high above the heads of the line, now received a more horizontal direction, and passed very close above the heads of Shutz's and Ragan's regiments, composing the centre and left of Stansbury's line—when a universal flight of these two regiments was the consequence. This leaving the right of the 5th wholly unsupported, I ordered it to halt, rode swiftly across the field, toward those who had so shamefully fled, and exerted my voice to the utmost, to arrest them. They halted, began to collect, and seemed to be returning to their places. An ill-founded reliance, that their officers would succeed in rallying them, when I had thus succeeded in stopping the greatest part of them, induced me immediately to return to the 5th, the situation of which was likely to become very critical, and that position gave me the best command of view. To my astonishment and mortification, however, when I had regained my position, I found the whole of these regiments, except a few of Ragan's, not more than forty, rallied by himself, and as many perhaps of Shutz's, rallied I learn by Captain Showers, and an officer whose name I do not recollect, were flying in the utmost precipitation and disorder.

"The advanced artillery had immediately followed the riflemen, and retired by the left of the 5th. I di-

rected them to take post on a rising ground, which I pointed out in the rear. The 5th, and the artillery on its left, still remained, and I hoped that their fire, notwithstanding the obstruction of the boughs of the orchard, which, being below, covered the enemy, would have been enabled to scour the approach, and prevent his advance. The enemy's light troops, by single men, showed themselves on the lower edge of the left of the orchard, and received the fire of the 5th, and the artillery, which made them draw back. The cover to them was, however, so complete, that they were enabled to advance *singly*, and take positions, from which their fire annoyed the 5th considerably, without either that regiment, or the artillery, being able to return the fire with any probability of effect. In this situation, I had actually given an order to the 5th, and artillery, to retire up the hill toward a wood, more to the left, and a little in the rear, for the purpose of drawing them farther from the orchard, and out of reach of the enemy's fire, while he was sheltered by the orchard. An aversion, however, to retire, before the necessity became stronger, and the hope that the enemy would issue in a body from the left of the orchard, and enable us to act upon him on terms of equality, and the fear that a movement of retreat might, in raw troops, produce some confusion and lose us this chance, induced me instantly to countermand this order, and direct the artillery to fire into a *wooden barn*, on the lower end of the orchard, behind which I supposed the enemy might be sheltered, in considerable numbers. The fire of the enemy now began, however, to annoy the 5th still

more, in wounding several of them; and a strong column of the enemy having passed up the road, on the right of the 5th, and beginning to deploy into the field to take them in flank, I directed the artillery to retire to the hill to which I had directed the Baltimore artillery to proceed and halt, and ordered the 5th regiment also to retire. This corps, which had heretofore acted so firmly, evinced the usual incapacity of raw troops to make orderly movements in the face of the enemy, and their retreat, in a very few moments, became a flight of absolute and total disorder."

Stansbury's narrative presents nearly the same results, but with the addition of a circumstance which Winder altogether omits, though materially affecting the progress and issue of the combat. "After," he says, "giving an order of battle to the first line, on returning from a short visit to the artillery, I found that *Ragan's and Shutz's regiments had been moved from the place where I had stationed them, to a hill upward of five hundred yards in the rear of the artillery and riflemen;* where, uncovered by the trees of the orchard, their situation and numbers were clearly seen by the enemy, and the flanks of the artillery and riflemen made liable to be turned. Again—while conversing with General Winder, the *5th regiment was taken out of the orchard, marched up to the hill*, and, as before observed, *the whole at so great a distance from the artillery and riflemen, that they had to contend with the whole British force. Whose plan this was, I know not; it was not mine, nor did it meet with my approbation.*"

Major Pinckney's estimate of this new order of battle, was not more favorable than Stansbury's. "The 5th regiment," he says, "which had been removed from a position where it might have contrived to repulse the enemy, in his attempts to leave the bridge, had now, to the great discouragement of my companies, and of the artillery, been made to retire to a hill, several hundred yards in the rear. The two companies of General Stansbury's brigade, acting as riflemen, had changed their position, so that I no longer perceived them. The residue of the brigade had been moved from the left, and made to take ground (invisible to us by reason of the intervening orchard) on the right of the 5th regiment, with its own right resting on the main road, and disclosed to the enemy."

It is only in the following report, that we are made acquainted with this busy and blundering tactician, whom Stansbury does not know, and whom Pinckney will not name. "*The 5th regiment,*" says Sterret, "*was formed under the direction of Colonel Monroe, on the left, and in line with General Stansbury's brigade.*" "I ought also to notice, that *the first line formed on the battle ground, was changed, under the direction of Colonel Monroe.*" In addition to this information, Colonel Sterret adds: "The action commenced about one o'clock, by an attack on the redoubt, where the riflemen and artillery were placed. These soon retired, and the 5th covered their retreat, and kept up a lively fire, and supported their place in line with firmness, until the enemy had gained both flanks, when *the order to retreat was given, by General Winder*

himself. The imposing front of the enemy was never disconcerted by the fire of the artillery or the riflemen, and the brigade of General Stansbury was seen to fly, as soon as the action became serious. *No second line or reserve appeared to advance or support us*, and we were outflanked and defeated, in as short a time as such an operation could well be performed."

The last statement we offer, is that made by Commodore Barney, who says:—"After receiving orders to withdraw my guns and men from the Eastern-branch bridge, we proceeded immediately to Bladensburgh, to join the army. The day was hot, and my men much crippled by the severe marches made for some days before. I preceded the men, and when I arrived at the line which separates the district from Maryland, the battle began. I sent an officer back to hurry up the men, who came on at a trot. We now took our position on the rising ground, put the pieces in battery, posted the marines and seamen, acting as infantry, on my right to support the pieces, and thus waited the approach of the enemy. During this period, the engagement continued; the enemy advancing, and our army retreating before them, apparently, in much disorder. At length, the enemy made his appearance on the main road in force, and in front of my battery, and on seeing us, made a halt. I reserved our fire. In a few minutes, he again advanced, when I ordered an 18-pounder to be fired, which completely cleared the road. Shortly after, a second and a third attempt were made to come forward, when all were destroyed. They then crossed over into an open field, and at-

tempted to turn our right flank, where they were met by the fire of three 12-pounders, the marines under Captain Miller, and the men acting as infantry, and again were totally cut up. By this time, not a vestige of our army remained, excepting a body of five or six hundred posted on a height, from whom I expected much support from their fine situation. The enemy from this period never appeared in force in front of us. They pushed forward their sharpshooters, one of whom shot my horse, who fell dead under me, between two of my guns. The enemy thus kept in check by our fire for more than an hour, now began to outflank us on the right. Our guns were therefore turned that way, when they pushed two or three hundred men up the hill, toward the corps stationed as abovementioned, which, to my great mortification, made no resistance; giving a fire or two, and then retreating. In this situation, we had the whole army of the enemy to contend with; our ammunition was expended, and, unfortunately, the drivers of my ammunition-wagons had gone off in the general panic. At this time, I received a severe wound in my thigh; Captain Miller was also wounded, Sailing-Master Warner killed, and Sailing-Master Martin wounded; but, to the honor of my officers and men, as fast as their companions and messmates fell at the guns, they were instantly replaced from the infantry."

Before concluding this article, a brief detail of the rules of war applying to the case, may not be useless.

1. In *defensive* war, when local and other circumstances forbid fortification, the true resource of the

weaker power, will be found in a speedy adoption and strict observance of partisan principles—*constant vigilance* and *unremitting activity.* "By these," says a high authority, "much may be done. The former will sufficiently secure against danger; and the latter, by multiplying small attacks, made by day and by night, on the camp-guards, detachments, and communications of an enemy, will greatly retard his progress, diminish his strength, and, not improbably, exhaust his patience."

Of this important rule, the first injunction only was remembered. Care sufficient was taken to avoid danger; but of the multiplied attacks directed by the second, nothing was seen during the five days of campaign which preceded the 24th of August—whence it followed, that the strength, progress, and patience, of the enemy, underwent neither change nor disturbance till that day.

2. "Pitched battles generally decide the fate of a campaign, and not unfrequently, that of a war; whence it follows as a rule, that conflicts of this kind should never be hazarded by an army hastily collected, and wholly unpractised in war, when contending with another, highly disciplined, well equipped, ably commanded, and nearly, if not entirely, equal to itself in numerical force."

This rule, imperative as it is, was disregarded—a fact the more extraordinary, as the General well knew the high military character of the enemy, and even believed his numerical force to be equal, if not superior, to his own; while of the American army he declared, that

"*not two men of the whole, knew anything of military service.*"[1]

3. "The first duty of a General determined to risk a field-fight, and having the choice of ground on which to do it, is to select a position adapted to the arms, number, and character, of the troops at his disposal; and thus qualify himself for the high additional duty of giving to the whole a corresponding order of battle."

This rule, like its predecessors, escaped the General's notice. He was compelled, as we have seen, to fight a battle on ground unfit for the purpose, and on dispositions made of his troops, by men wholly ignorant of war, either as an art or a science.

4. "In orders of battle of two lines, the second takes the character, and performs the duties of a reserve." It cannot but be thought extraordinary, that a rule so obvious, should have been either unknown or disregarded by men wearing the badge, and exercising the authority of generals; yet such was the fact—Winder, in his excitement, overlooked it, and Smith and his brigade showed no inclination to perform the duty.

[1] Winder's letter to the Committee of Inquiry. At page 158, of the report to Congress of this committee, we find the following description given by the General of the army he commanded: "A mass of men suddenly assembled, without organization or discipline, or officers of any the least knowledge of service, excepting Major Peters; or if any, unknown to me." Yet to officers thus described —to Stansbury and Smith—he assigns the duty of choosing his position, and to Mr. Monroe, that of forming his order of battle!

5. "When retreat becomes necessary, the orders for making it should always be accompanied with a short and well-defined designation of a point for reunion. It is only by a strict observance of this rule, that the evils arising from a total dispersion of force, can be avoided." It cannot be forgotten, that in the present case, the omission to give out a rallying point, produced a dispersion of force, which formed the only plausible reason, for refusing to occupy and defend the capitol.[1]

6. "If, in a retreat, a beaten army find on its route a defensible position—such as villages and strong isolated buildings often furnish—it should be promptly seized, and strenuously defended." Military history offers many instances in which armies beaten in the field, have, by acting on this rule, become eventually the victors. Our own chronicles present a distinguished case of this kind, in the gallant and successful defence made of Chew's house, by Colonel Musgrave and six hundred British infantry, in the campaign of 1777, when assailed by a large portion of the American army, commanded by General Washington in person. If the two cases be examined in their several relations—the greater force of Winder than that of Musgrave for defence; the smaller force of Ross than that of Washington for attack; and the decided superiority of the capitol to Chew's house for position—the conclusion is irresistible, that, had Winder followed this example and defended the capitol, the result would

[1] Appendix, No. 28.

have been as fortunate in the one case, as it was discreditable in the other—the city would have escaped outrage, the capitol destruction, the army censure, and the nation disgrace.[1]

[2] Appendix, No. 29.

CHAPTER VI.

British plan of campaign for 1814.—Armament sent from Bermuda to Pensacola.—Unsuccessful attack of the enemy on Fort Bowyer.—Jackson's march on Pensacola.—Arrival of the British fleet and army.—Capture of the American gunboats.—Descent made from Lake Borgne.—Battles of the 23d and 28th December, and of the 1st and 8th of January.—Retreat of the British.—Preliminaries of peace.

THOUGH in the mode of conducting the war on the part of Great Britain, during the campaigns of 1812–'13, there had been many instances of barbarism,[1] still no system of this kind had been avowed by any accredited agent of that country, till the summer of 1814, when Vice-Admiral Cochrane officially announced that, "*under the new and imperative character of his orders, it became his duty to destroy and lay waste all towns and districts of the United States, found accessible to the attack of British armaments.*"[2] In pursuance of this plan, so little to be expected from a power pretending to a high degree of moral feeling, and even assuming the proud and responsible character of defender of the Christian faith, the summer months were assigned to devastations in the *north*, and those of au-

[1] River Raisin, Niagara frontier, Havre-de-Grace, Frenchtown, and Hampton.

[2] Cochrane's official letter to Mr. Monroe, August, 1814.

tumn and winter, to the pillage and destruction of the *south*. Of the objects presented by the latter, the emporium of western commerce could not be overlooked; and the less so, as her wealth was known to be redundant; her means of defence few and feeble; and her population, made up of different names, races, and colors, believed to be discordant with each other, and not well affected to the government.

With these views, New Orleans was selected for plunder and destruction, and a veteran army of fifteen thousand combatants, sustained by a fleet of fifty ships, including transports, assigned to the service.[1] Still, it could not but be known, even to a cabinet as little acquainted as that of Great Britain with American topography,[2] that, unless means could be found for keeping at home the bold and skilful riflemen of Kentucky and Tennessee, the issue of the experiment would be doubtful, if not desperate.

To this end, therefore, an auxiliary measure, that of renewing the Indian war on the southern frontier of the union, was adopted; in pursuance of which four armed vessels, and a detachment of regular artillerists, were despatched, during the summer, to Pensacola; whither, they were soon after followed by Colonel Nichols, bringing with him instructions "to assemble and organize fugitive Indians, runaway negroes, French

[1] Latour's memoirs of the war in East Florida and Louisiana, p. 136.

[2] No bad specimen of this will be found in Napier's Peninsular War. Question put by the British minister to Admiral Warren, in 1812: "Will it not be practicable to ascend the St. Lawrence, in light frigates, as far as Lake Ontario?"

pirates, and all such inhabitants of Louisiana, Mississippi, and Kentucky, as having witnessed the folly, and felt the oppression of the American government, should be willing to accept the overtures, and receive the protection of his Britannic majesty."[1] In the discharge of this service, Nichols was both active and ardent, but decidedly unsuccessful. Of black and red allies, the number obtained, did not exceed eight hundred men; of the French pirates, no one would confide in the proposed "guarantee of a British officer;" and, of American citizens, not a man was found, foolish or base enough to join the British standard. Though thus defeated in the more prominent objects of his mission, Nichols was soon furnished with another; probably, on the suggestion, and certainly, with the approbation and support, of the Spanish governor—that of capturing Fort Bowyer, a small redoubt, located on a point of land commanding the passage from the gulf into the bay of Mobile.[2] The attack thus suggested, was not less acceptable to the naval, than to the military commander, neither of whom had the smallest apprehension, "that four British ships, carrying ninety-two guns, and a land force, somewhat exceeding seven hundred combatants, could possibly fail in reducing a small work, mounting only twenty short carronades, and defended by little more than one hundred men, unprovided alike with furnaces to heat shot, or casements to cover themselves from rockets and shells."[3] Acting on this

[1] Nichols's manifestoes. See Eaton's or Martin's Louisiana. [2] Idem.

[3] British force, *four* armed vessels, 590 men, and 90 guns, (32 pound carronades.) Nichols's corps, 130 marines, and 600 Indians

belief, the expedition was soon prepared, and, on the 12th of September, sailed from Pensacola. The 13th and 14th having been employed in debarking the land force and establishing a mortar-battery in the rear of the fort, it was not till the 15th that the armed vessels took their positions within musket-shot of its front—when a vigorous conflict ensued; which, with few pauses and little abatement, lasted for three hours in succession. At the end of this time, the cable of the Hermes being shot away, the ship became unmanageable, and, drifting with the current, grounded on a sand-bank; where, her preservation becoming hopeless, she was soon after set on fire, and abandoned by her commander and crew. The Caron, a vessel of equal size and equipment with the Hermes, was less unfortunate, being able, though much injured, to get to sea, whither she was speedily followed by the Sophia and Anaconda, leaving behind them Nichols and his motley followers, to effect, as they might, their escape by land.

A termination so unexpected, to an enterprise from which much was hoped, and nothing feared, called forth a full display of Spanish sympathy. All pretence to neutrality in the war, was now abandoned; the public stores were thrown open for the supply of the fugitives; Nichols, the British leader, was installed an inmate of the governor's family, and the town and fort

and negroes. Enemy's loss in the action, 1 ship burnt, 232 men killed and wounded. Garrison of Fort Bowyer, 120 combatants, officers included, 20 pieces of cannon, several of which were on coast carriages and in batteries, hastily thrown up, and leaving the gunners uncovered from the knee upward. Loss in killed, 8.

virtually committed to his custody; while on the flag-staff of the latter were seen entwined the colors of England and Spain.[1]

These, and other facts of similar character, were speedily reported to Jackson, who, finding in them abundant proof of Spanish subserviency to British interests, and strong presumptive evidence, that the force acting under Nichols, was but the precursor of a larger British armament, promptly determined to possess himself of Pensacola, "peaceably if he could, forcibly if he must." Hastening, accordingly, to Fort Montgomery on the Alabama, where he had assembled an army of four thousand men, he began his march on the 2d of November, and on the 6th encamped within two miles of his object. From this point he immediately despatched a message and flag to the Spanish governor, announcing his movement, his motives for making it, and the means he possessed for effecting his purpose. Major Piere, the person charged with this communication, was permitted to reach the outskirts of the town without interruption or notice; but, on attempting to enter it, though coming singly, and displaying a flag, he was fired upon from the fort, and compelled to withdraw.

It may be readily inferred, from what is known of Jackson's constitutional temperament, that the report made of this occurrence, had no tendency either to shake his purpose, or greatly to abate his excitement. Yet, remembering that his intended movement had not received the sanction of the government, though fre-

[1] See Latour's Memoirs.

quently requested,[1] he felt himself impelled, before resorting to force, to make a second and friendly overture. Availing himself, accordingly, of a Spanish soldier, found within the limits of the camp, he addressed a note to Governor Manriquez, stating the manner in which his former messenger had been received, and requiring a speedy explanation of it. This communication was safely made and promptly answered, by an unqualified disavowal, on the part of the governor, of all participation in the act complained of; and a direct assurance that, on the repetition of the experiment, his messenger and flag should be received with all proper respect. Though giving little credit to this promise, yet unwilling to reject any proposition having in it even a show of friendship, Jackson again despatched Major Piere, with a solemn declaration, that "coming without any intention of making war on Spain, and limiting himself to measures strictly defensive against British hostility, he but requested to be made the occupant of the town and forts, to be held for Spain, until that power should find herself in condition to assert and maintain the neutrality she professed."

[1] Jackson's first notice of Nichols's arrival with armed vessels and Indian supplies in East Florida, and suggesting an attack on Pensacola, was dated in July. The information thus given, was not accredited by the President, who, in a note to the Secretary of War, says, "his belief on this subject will soon be corrected." The qualified permission, given in the Secretary's letter of the 18th July, for making the proposed attack, though carried to the postoffice for transmission to the General, was intercepted and kept back till after the decisive action of the 8th January, which could not have been done, but with the privity, or by the order of the President.

These terms being speedily rejected, the army resumed its march on the town, and carrying by storm a battery, and one or two fortified houses at the head of the street, became, in a few minutes, masters of the place. At this critical moment, Manriquez, the Spanish governor, was seen mingling in the crowd, imploring Jackson's mercy, and tendering an immediate surrender, on the terms so recently prescribed by that officer. Having no desire to inflict any unnecessary punishment on the place or its inhabitants, the American commander ordered an immediate cessation of hostilities, withdrew a large portion of his force to the camp he had left in the morning, and assigned a small detachment as the future garrison of the fort, when, in a paroxysm of folly and phrensy, de Soto, the Spanish commander, refused to open the gates. This interruption was, fortunately, shortlived; apprized that measures were taken to batter the fort, the Spaniard soon recovered his senses, gave up his keys, and permitted the garrison to take quiet possession of St. Michael. Events of this character could not be indifferent to Nichols and Piercy, the two agents charged with his Britannic Majesty's interest at Pensacola. Seeing no security but in a speedy flight, the former availed himself of the squadron commanded by the latter, and embarking his allies, red and black, carried the savages to the forests of Appalachicola, and the four hundred slaves, whom he had allured to his standard by a promise of freedom, to a West India market.[1]

[1] Latour's Memoir.

Jackson's object being thus speedily accomplished, he had now time to estimate the value of the acquisition he had made; and soon discovering, that, if it was wise to make the movement while threatened with the renewal of an Indian war, it would not be less so (now that danger was at an end), to withdraw his troops promptly, and carry back his force to the defence of points likely to be soon attacked by a more powerful enemy. Under these new views, after reinstating Manriquez in his former authority, he began his retrograde movement, and, on the 1st of December, established his headquarters in New Orleans.

On the 5th of that month, only four days after the General's arrival at his post, the British armament destined to the attack of New Orleans, appeared off the harbor of Pensacola. During their stay at this point, its commanders were careful to make themselves acquainted with the topography of the coast, and finding that of the different avenues of approach to their object, those through Lakes Borgne and Pontchartrain were the shortest and safest, they, on the 10th, anchored near Cat and Ship islands; where they made another, and not unimportant discovery, that, before either of these routes could be made available to their present purpose, an American flotilla, part of which was then in view, must be either captured or destroyed. To this end, forty-three barges, strongly manned, and carrying each a carronade in its bow, were made ready; and, on the 13th, got sight of their enemy, consisting of five gunboats, which, in conformity to the orders given them, were endeavoring to gain a

position under the guns of Fort Coquille. The wind, hitherto favorable to this intention, having entirely failed, and the current running strongly against them, they, on the 14th, found themselves compelled, though greatly overmatched, to take the chances of a battle; and accordingly took a position off the western end of Malheureux island. The barges, in the meantime, though retarded by the causes which had obstructed the progress of the American flotilla, found a remedy in their oars, and in the great power to use them, resulting from the crowd of seamen they severally carried. It was not, however, till noon, that they were able to come to close action; when a sharp conflict, sustained for an hour and a half, followed—terminating, as might have been expected, in the entire capture of the United States gunboats.[1]

Having thus got rid of the only enemy capable of disturbing their future movements on the lake, the British army was speedily withdrawn from the shipping, and transferred to Pea island; where a party of Spanish fishermen awaited their coming, with information, that "the whole force assigned to Gen. Jackson's command did not exceed five thousand men—that, of this number, not more than sixteen hundred were in or near the city—that the population in general was, if not opposed to the war, either lukewarm or desponding—that, though orders had been given for obstructing

"Our loss in killed and wounded, in this unequal contest, has been trifling, compared to that of the enemy, which amounts to nearly 400 men."—*Lieut. Jones's report to Commodore Patterson*, 12*th March*, 1815.

and guarding the different inlets from the lake to the town, no attention had yet been paid to that of Bienvenu; and, lastly, that a vigorous movement of five or six hours made from this point, would carry the army to the centre of the city, and decide the fate of the campaign." Information of so much promise, could not fail to be acceptable, yet, coming as it did from men confessedly unprincipled, and not less willing to sell their country than their fish, it was deemed unsafe to act upon it, till the facts it assumed had been tested by other persons, on whose good faith and intelligence more reliance could be placed. The service thus required was well and quickly performed by Captain Spencer of the navy, and Lieutenant Peddie of the army—the latter of whom, in the garb and under the guidance of a Spanish fisherman, examined the route from the lake to the river, slaked his thirst at the stream of the latter, and, in the night of the 20th, returned to the army with a report, that "the statement made by the Spaniards was essentially correct, in what related to the inlet and route from Bienvenu to the Mississippi."

The question hitherto doubtful—where the descent should be made—being now settled, the first brigade of Keane's division, amounting to two thousand four hundred combatants, was placed in boats, and despatched to the Fishermen's village; whence, without obstruction or annoyance of any kind, it continued its movement to the western bank of the river, and, at half after 11 o'clock, A. M., of the 22d, took a position on Villery's canal.

It was at this point (but nine miles distant from New Orleans) that a part of Jackson's staff, on their way to Le Beuf, discovered this unlooked-for approach of the enemy; and, as may readily be supposed, were not slow in reporting the fact to their chief. The information, though entirely unexpected, furnished a new illustration of the characteristic promptitude of the American General. Leaving the brigades of Carrol and Claiborne, to guard the approaches to the city in his rear, he hastened to concentrate what remained of his disposable force, and determined to test the spirit and discipline of his adversary, by a night attack, made on his front and flanks. In pursuance of this decision, the troops (not exceeding fifteen hundred men) formed in two columns, were placed within stroke of the enemy—while the United States armed schooner Carolina, under the direction of Commodore Patterson, fell quietly down the river, till opposite the centre of the British encampment; when, dropping an anchor, and presenting a broadside, she, at half after 7, P. M., opened upon it a heavy and well-directed fire; producing, as in other cases of unexpected attack, a dispersion of corps and disorder of movement, which, had there been light enough to have profited by the circumstance, would have given to Jackson a decided advantage. Such, however, not being the fact, the attack made by the army in support of this first and favorable impression, took at once the character of a skirmish fought blindfold—displaying, in many cases, high degrees of individual courage, but a total absence of either concentrated strength or manœuvring skill.

The ordinary darkness of the hour (10, P. M.) being much increased by a fog, the American General became doubtful, whether a continuance of the attack would be prudent. And, under this impression, ordered a retreat, and took a position, for what remained of the night, in front of his enemy, determined to renew the action in the morning. Though bravely taken, this decision was soon and wisely yielded to second and sounder thoughts—suggested alike by the military skill and veteran habits of his enemy—the small number and undisciplined condition of his own force—and, lastly, by the strategic character of the position he occupied—a narrow plain, flanked on the right by the Mississippi; on the left by a cypress swamp, and covered in front, throughout its whole extent, by a canal, furnishing both trench and parapet, and requiring only a small degree of labor to make it impregnable to either the physical force or technical skill of his adversary. Instead, therefore, of marching at daybreak on the enemy, and putting everything to hazard by a field-fight with a veteran army, which, during the night had been reinforced by two thousand four hundred combatants, he wisely directed his energy and perseverance to the new and strictly defensive system, which he had now adopted.

While Jackson was thus employed, his antagonist, forgetting that the first duty of a belligerant making a war of offence is, "to find and fight his enemy, or, if this be impracticable, to interrupt his labors and destroy his defences," permitted the whole of the 24th to escape, without aiming at any purpose more impor-

tant than that of dislodging or destroying the small armed vessel, which had so seriously disturbed the order of his bivouac during the night of the 23d. To this end, therefore, a number of heavy pieces of ordnance, cannon, mortars, and howitzers, were brought from the fleet, and, on the 27th, placed in battery on the bank of the river; by a second discharge from which, the schooner was set on fire, and speedily abandoned.

All obstacles to a forward movement having been thus removed, the whole military force given to the expedition collected, and Packenham, the new commander-in-chief, arrived, it was now determined to go on, test the strength of Jackson's intrenchments, and the skill and spirit with which an army, essentially militia, could be brought to defend them. Under these views, what remained of the day was given to such reconnoissance of the American defences as was practicable; and the night to the construction of batteries to be employed on the morrow. At daybreak of the 28th, the whole British army was accordingly seen advancing in two columns—that of the right, along the woody margin of the cypress swamp; and that of the left, along the public road near the bank of the river—each preceded by skirmishers in open order, forming a line nearly continuous from column to column.

It was not till after a march of four miles, that this imposing array, occasionally discharging showers of rockets, came within view of the intrenchments it was destined to attack. These, though not finished, were found to be formidable—a high and solid parapet, well

supplied with cannon, bristling with muskets and rifles, and covered by a deep exterior ditch, filled with water, presented a front difficult of approach; while its flanks, well redoubted and covered, left to the assailant a choice only between a speedy abandonment of his purpose, or the risk inseparable from a direct assault. Packenham's measures were promptly accommodated to this state of things; the meditated assault was given up, the infantry withdrawn, and the artillery brought forward—when a cannonade of several hours' duration, and considerable vivacity, followed—leaving no doubt on the part of the British, that "in the use of this arm, their enemy was not less formidable than themselves, and that the sooner their great effort was made, the more likely it would be to succeed." The form to be given to this was, however, less clear; was it to be expected, that manœuvring on so narrow a front, Jackson could be induced to forego the advantages of his intrenchments, and risk a field-fight on open ground? Was there more reason to believe that, if tenacious of his position, this could be successfully turned on either flank? And, lastly, would it be advisable to assail his front, unless his batteries could be silenced, and his parapet breached? These questions being all decided in the negative, another expedient was suggested, and immediately adopted—that of no longer considering the American intrenchment a field-work, but a regular fortification; and employing against it the means ordinarily used in a siege.[1] The 28th, 29th, and 30th of December, were accordingly given to the accumulation of arms and

[1] British Campaign in America.

ammunition for the purpose; and the night of the 31st, to the erection of batteries at the short distance of three hundred yards from the American line. To this end, half of the army was put on extra duty, with spades and shovels; while the remainder, formed in small columns of attack, protected the laborers. At daybreak of the 1st of January, three batteries were finished, mounted, and ready for service; but the morning being hazy, it was not till 8 o'clock, that the cannonade became active and general. In this operation, the enemy put forth his whole strength from 8 to 10 o'clock; from 10 to 12, his fire slackened, and at 2 o'clock, may be said to have entirely ceased; terminating, like that of the 28th, in an abandonment of his battery and guns. In this trial of skill, the palm was evidently with the American artillerists; the enemy's works being much injured, and several of his guns disabled or dismounted, while those of Jackson, with a few exceptions, had escaped injury, and his parapets at no point so breached, as made an assault practicable.

From this second discomfiture, the enemy retired "not only baffled and disappointed, but disheartened and discontented;" when, to reinstate his self-confidence and good humor, a reinforcement of sixteen hundred men, brought by General Lambert, and two thousand seamen, furnished by the fleet, was added to his numbers, giving an aggregate of eight thousand combatants for field operations. Under this new stimulus, a third project of attack, having in it more of strategic character than either of its predecessors, was discussed

and adopted, including, beside a vigorous assault to be made on Jackson's left, and another on his right, the surprise or storm of a battery on the western bank of the river, covering and commanding the American line. For the execution of this last and highly important part of the plan, a preliminary labor of formidable character was indispensable—that of cutting a ditch from the lake to the camp, for the passage of such number of boats as would be necessary to transport, at a single trip, the whole of the detachment destined to act on the western side of the river. This service was promptly assigned to the army; and by its incessant labor, day and night, from the 1st to the 6th, was, on the evening of the latter, reported as "finished." Orders were accordingly issued for making the intended assault at daybreak of the 8th, assigning to General Gibbs, the storm of Jackson's left flank; to General Keane, the attack on his right; to General Lambert, the command of the reserve, and to Colonel Thornton, of the 85th regiment, the detached operation.

Packenham's columns were accordingly early in motion, and, at the first dawn of the morning, the signal for general attack was given; but receiving no response from Thornton, the movement was from time to time suspended, until at last despairing of the western part of the plan, the assault on Jackson's left was ordered. But here it was the fate of the British commander to meet a new and serious cause of mortification. Entirely convinced by what he had seen and heard of Jackson's defences, that, without fascines to fill up trenches, and

scaling-ladders to mount parapets, any attempt to carry the position by storm would probably fail, he had, in preparing for this new effort, been careful to provide an abundant supply of both articles; and, to render more certain their transportation to points where they might be wanted, they were specially committed to the charge of Colonel Mullens, of the 44th regiment, who, from negligence or terror, failed to bring with him a single ladder or fascine. In the feverish state of Packenham's mind, he saw but one remedy for the evil—that of coercing obedience. The delinquent was accordingly sent back to fulfil the original order; but, as in other cases where duty is prescribed as a punishment, and executed under reproaches for the past, and menaces for the future, this was badly performed. The regiment was slow in returning, and when it did arrive, finding that it could not reach its place in the column, but under the fire of the enemy, it disencumbered itself of all extra burdens, and threw down both fascines and ladders, where they were not wanted, and could not readily be found—an event, having no tendency to restore the composure of the British commander, who, hastening to the 44th, and finding its colonel absent, placed himself at its head, and instantly ordered a charge. The 21st and 4th regiments being already great sufferers, and in some degree of confusion, the 93d was pushed forward, and soon reached the ditch; but to scale the parapet without ladders was impossible. A few bold and active men, by mounting on the shoulders of others, made their way into the work, but were immediately killed or wounded, while such as

stood without, exposed to a constant fire of muskets and rifles, were cut down by companies. Nor was the demonstration on Jackson's right more successful than the assault made on his left. By much daring effort, Colonel Ranney was able to carry an unfinished bastion on the river road, somewhat detached from the head of the intrenchment, but, being promptly met by a fire from Beal's riflemen, the attack soon ended in the death of its gallant leader, and the capture or expulsion of such of his followers as had entered the bastion.

Amid perils so multiplied and direct, it cannot be supposed, that officers of the highest staff could escape injury. Soon after the assault began, General Packenham received a slight wound in the knee, by a musket-ball which killed his horse—when, soon after, mounting another, a second ball, more fatally directed, brought him lifeless to the ground. On seeking his successor, (Major-General Gibbs,) he also was found mortally wounded; nor was Major-General Keane, the third of that rank in the army, though still living, in condition to assume the command; his wounds being such, as made necessary his immediate removal from the field of battle—a circumstance of diminished interest, from the fact, that "at that moment authority and obedience were both extinct. No one was disposed to issue an order, nor, had any been issued, would it have been obeyed." In a word, all now was confusion and dismay—*Sauve qui peut*, became the general cry;—nor was the route to be restrained till after the fugitives had reached their encampment.

While the enemy's main attack had this disastrous issue, that made by the detached corps, under the direction of Thornton, had the most complete success. In conformity to the general orders of the 7th of January, this officer, with the fourteen hundred men assigned to his command, reached the bank of the river early in the evening of that day, when, to his surprise, he found no boats prepared to receive him, nor was it till near midnight, that a number, barely sufficient to transport one third of his detachment, was placed at his disposition. Believing, that to wait for an additional supply of boats, would entirely defeat the arrangements, so far as regarded the attack assigned to him, he determined to proceed with those which had been furnished, and make such use of his small force as circumstances should direct. He, accordingly, pressed vigorously forward—drove in an outpost which he found on his route, and soon after was able to present the head of his column before the American battery. A charge, promptly made by a few seamen, and well sustained by a part of the 85th regiment, led by himself, completely succeeded—giving him full and quiet possession of the work, and eighteen pieces of ordnance. While preparing to give to these a new direction, a message from General Lambert, apprizing him of what had occurred on the eastern bank of the river, and directing, on his part, a speedy return to the British camp, was received and promptly complied with.

Contemporaneously with this battle, an attempt was made (by a small squadron of British ships stationed off the mouths of the Mississippi for the purpose of

blockade) to ascend the river. On the 9th of January, when opposite to Fort St. Philip, they opened upon it a heavy fire of shot and shells, which, with few and short pauses, was continued for nine days and nights; when, failing to make any impression favorable to themselves, on either the fort or the garrison, they withdrew to their former position.

With these occurrences, the campaign on the Mississippi essentially ended, leaving to the American General the prosecution of a *petite guerre*, kept up on the outposts of the enemy, and to the British commander the higher duty of extricating himself and his army from a perilous position—an exploit, achieved without either loss or interruption, by a well-executed march made in the night of the 18th, from Villery's canal to the shore of Lake Borgne. At this point, Lambert's communications with the fleet were speedily reinstated; and on the 27th the army was transferred to Isle Dauphin, where, to console it for the late unsuccessful pursuit of "beauty and booty," a promise was made of the speedy capture of Mobile. In pursuing this object, it was soon perceived, that Fort Bowyer, the key of the position should be first secured, when a careful reconnoissance was made of that post, and a determination taken, "not to attack it on the side next the gulf," which might be capable of defence, but by a regular siege on the land side, where it was wholly and obviously indefensible. In conformity to these views, a siege in all its formality was instituted on the 8th of February—on the 10th, the batteries were carried within thirty yards of the ditch—on the

11th a surrender was agreed upon, and on the 12th an evacuation made of the post; events which, on the 13th, were followed by intelligence "that the war between the United States and Great Britain had been terminated by a treaty of peace, concluded at Ghent, in the month of December."

REMARKS.—The preceding details of the campaign of 1814–'15, in the south, will not be found uninteresting to the military reader, as well by the evidences of wisdom and knowledge which, in some cases, they furnish, as by the blunders and ignorance they exhibit in others. To give to the cases alluded to somewhat more of development than they received in the text, we subjoin the following commentary:—

1st. So long as there was reason to believe, that Nichols would succeed in rekindling an Indian war on our southern frontier, Pensacola, which he occupied as a place of rendezvous, supply, and instruction, for his allies, became an object of justifiable attack on our part, as well on principles of international law, as on those of military service; and, of course, entirely authorized the applications made by Jackson, for permission to capture that post. It must not, however, be dissembled, that, before the General began his march from Fort Montgomery, the circumstances of the case had undergone nearly a total change—Nichols having altogether failed in getting together a force competent to the object.[4] Under this view of the subject, the General's attack and capture of the town, on the 7th of

[1] His Indian and negro force did not exceed 600 or 700 men.—*Col. Jansen's letters to the Secretary of War, &c.*

November, 1814, was, to say the least of it, decidedly ill-judged, involving at once an offence to a neutral power, and a palpable misapplication of both time and force, as regarded the defence of New Orleans.

2d. An error of similar character with the preceding, will be found in the fact, that, after the arrival of the British armament, the garrison of Fort Bowyer was not only continued, but increased; though, from its locality, wholly unable to aid in any important purpose of the campaign. Nor was this the whole extent of the evil, for, by the disposition made of this gallant corps, it was not only subjected to present inaction, but ultimately, as we have seen, to the perils of a siege, and the humiliation of a surrender.

3d. Among the few defences found at New Orleans, when the enemy arrived on the coast, were five or six gun-boats; well fitted for guarding the avenues, of which an enterprising enemy would avail himself, in passing from Lake Borgne to the bank of the Mississippi. But, from this important duty, the boats in question were withdrawn, and detached to the head of the lake, as a squadron of *reconnoissance*—a service more likely to be well-performed by unarmed, than by armed vessels.[1]

4th. After losing the boats, it was certainly to be expected, that substitutes, possessing habits of vigi-

[1] Jackson, in a letter to the War Department, 16th and 17th of September, 1814, says:—"I beg leave to remark to the Secretary of the Navy, through you, that had three of the gun-boats, as I had ordered, been at Fort Bowyer, two if not all four of the enemies' vessels, would have fallen into our hands."

lance, if not powers of resistance, would have been found to replace them; and thus have kept the commander-in-chief informed of any important circumstance, connected with the enemy's movements, coming within their cognizance. Instead, however, of giving to this subject the attention it required, the mouth of Bayou Catalin, or Fishermen's village, was wholly neglected till the evening of the 21st of December; and the guard then given to it, but consisted of six militia men and two negroes; all of whom were found asleep, in a fisherman's hut, when the debarkation of the British army began.

5th. When, on the 1st of December, the commanding General arrived at New Orleans, his attention was properly directed to the safety of his outposts, the increase of his army, and an ample supply of munitions of war; but, by some ill-founded prejudice, all means of defence at New Orleans, coming under the general head of *fortification*, were either overlooked or rejected—a fact the more extraordinary, as the topography of the city and its environs, so distinctly indicated their use. Had the General been better acquainted with military history, he would not have suffered a single day, of the twenty he had for preparation, to have passed, without forming one or more intrenched camps for the protection of the city. To sustain this opinion, we offer the following maxims of Napoleon and Frederick: "Intrenchments are useful alike in offensive and defensive war. They furnish excellent means for retarding, embarrassing, enfeebling, and disquieting a superior enemy."—"To elude a battle, with

a force greater than your own, you must intrench: positions, as ordinarily found, requiring the aid of art." "If the ground in your choice offers natural means for securing your flanks, occupy it; and if such is not to be found, resort must be had to fortification."

6th. When, at one o'clock of the 23d, the General was accidentally apprized of the arrival of more than two thousand men (forming the elite of the British army) on the banks of the Mississippi, and within nine miles of their object, he promptly decided to take at once the offensive, march upon the enemy, and bring him to action, before a second debarkation could be made. In this project, there was an obvious mixture of skill and error. The employment of the armed vessel was well imagined; and the disposition made of the troops, to sustain and increase the impressions produced by the fire of the shipping, was sufficiently conformed to the rules of art; but here our praise must end—for the *darkness* thought necessary to success, became the proximate cause of its defeat. Had the attack made by the schooner taken place half an hour before daybreak of the 24th, the surprise and confusion, on the part of the enemy, would not have been less than it actually was; but with this important difference—that, in a morning attack, Jackson's movements would have been made with the use of his eyes; no confusion would have been seen in his columns, nor would the British division, stowed away as it was, "panic-struck and prostrate behind a dike," been deemed "too formidable for attack."[1] A single well-

[1] Eaton's Life of Jackson.

directed discharge of the American artillery, would have driven it from its hiding-place, and exposed it, in mass and disorder, to the fire of fifteen hundred American rifles and muskets. It will not be thought extravagant to add, that, under such circumstances, a speedy surrender of the whole British detachment would have followed.

7th. In the General's official letter of the 9th of January, we have a detail of the important occurrences of the day preceding—exhibiting, on the part of the enemy, a total rout, setting at defiance both persuasion and authority; a fact, which at once presents the question—why, under such circumstances, the victory had not been consummated, by a prompt and vigorous pursuit of the fugitives. To this question, three answers, different if not discordant, have been given; that of Jackson himself ascribes the omission altogether to "the defeat of Morgan on the western side of the river;" that of Eaton, the General's biographer and protegé, "to a want of arms, which the government had failed to supply;" while the historian of Louisiana attributes it to "a bonhommie," somewhat akin to the inspiration which, according to Plutarch, prevented Hannibal from entering and sacking Rome, after the battle of Cannæ.

It may not be useless to see how far such reasons will be sustained by rules, probably coeval with war as a science. According to these, "when, from any cause, you find your enemy weak and dispirited, it becomes your duty to attack him promptly and vigorously."—"Nothing should prevent you from pursuing

a beaten and flying enemy, but a total want of provisions."—"Why engage in a war, but to subdue an adversary? And if so, why, after beating him to-day, give him time to rally and fight you to-morrow? The mere possession of a field of battle, is a barren victory." "Decisive battles shorten wars, and thus confer a benefit on both belligerants." Yielding, however, to General Jackson, the right of interpreting military maxims, as freely as he was wont to interpret constitutional questions and legal enactments—that is, "*as he understood them*," still it may be asked, why, if forbidden by prudence and humanity from destroying a beaten enemy, he should not have followed the example of Cesar, who, though refusing on this ground to fight Afranius, was, at the same time, careful to seize strategic points, cut him off from his supplies, and thus, without shedding a drop of blood, compel him to surrender.

That the adoption of this policy by Jackson, at any time between the battle of the 8th, and the retreat of the 18th of January, would have had a similar effect on Lambert, will not be doubted by those who know that, during the period we have mentioned, the temper of the British army had been much soured; their discipline greatly impaired; their self-confidence entirely lost; their magazine nearly exhausted; and their only source of supply (the British shipping) eighty miles distant;[1] ten of which were quagmire, furnishing a single, narrow, and dangerous pathway, on which

[1] Narrative of Campaigns in America, by a British officer.

were strategic points, which, if seized and defended, by even small corps, would have completely severed Lambert from his base, and compelled him to choose between a surrender and famine.[1]

8th. If a pursuit of the enemy on the 8th, was, in the General's opinion, a game too hazardous to be adopted, what, under any view of the subject, prevented a seizure of the cannon, left behind him on the field of battle till midnight? A detachment of one hundred men would have anticipated Lambert, and deprived him of his guns, either by removing them, or by knocking off their trunnions. The omission to do this, is the more extraordinary, as the British batteries, after their abandonment, were visited, and the guns counted, by a part of Jackson's army.

Having thus freely discussed the errors of our own functionaries, it may not be amiss to glance at those committed by their opponents—were it only to illustrate the maxim, that, "to know how far the winners of battles are entitled to applause, we must take into consideration how much of their success was owing to the blunders of their adversaries."

1st. We have seen that the first division of the British army, forming its advance, and amounting to two thousand four hundred combatants, arrived at 4 o'clock, A. M., of the 23d of December, at the junction of Villeray's canal with the Mazant, without loss, annoyance, fatigue, or even discovery; that, at half after eleven, it took a position on the eastern bank of the

[1] Latour's Memoirs.

Mississippi, barely nine miles from its object of attack; that between this and its present position, no American force or fortress of any kind had been established; that an open country and good road led directly to the city; that the mass of Jackson's army lay four miles north of this on the Gentilly road; and, lastly, that, till half after one, P. M., the American General was wholly unapprized of the successful landing and near approach of his enemy.[1] Can it be doubted, under circumstances thus auspicious, that, if Keane, instead of halting, first at the mouth of Villeray's canal, and again on the eastern bank of the Mississippi, had marched vigorously forward from either point, he would have found New Orleans defenceless? And again: had the British commander, at daybreak of the 24th, when the first division had been reinforced by the second, giving him an aggregate of four thousand eight hundred combatants, directed his columns on the new position taken that morning by Jackson, this officer must have chosen between fighting and flying; and in either case, New Orleans must have fallen.

2d. Nor was this inaction less apparent, in omitting to disturb the labors of his enemy on the 25th, 26th, and 27th of the month—*three entire days*, during which the left flank of the American intrenchment was unfinished, and of course liable to be either stormed or turned—yet, were these important duties postponed for the paltry purpose of driving off, or destroying, a small armed vessel!—a service, which, as

[1] Latour's Memoirs.

the event showed, would have been well and readily performed by a single gun, a few hot balls, and half a dozen practised artillerists.

3d. The command of the army having now devolved on Major-General Packenham, the 28th was employed in a reconnoissance and demonstration, made on the American line of defence, which, as we have seen, led to the conclusion, "that the works to be assailed, were not to be longer considered as field fortifications, but proceeded against by a regular siege.[1] An experiment of this kind was accordingly begun on the first of January; but, finding the American artillery more executive than their own, the plan was speedily abandoned, and another prescribed, differing from its predecessor only, by having annexed to it a *diversion*, to be made on the right flank of Jackson's intrenchments, and obviously intended to induce that officer to detach freely for its defence, from his *right* or *left;* and thus favor the assaults intended to be made on these points. It is not possible to say with certainty, what would have been the result, had this project been executed; but, fortunately, perhaps, for us, its contrivers, by the most obvious blundering, completely defeated it. The errors alluded to were—failing to supply a sufficient number of boats to transport Thornton's entire detachment across the river; want of punctuality in assembling such as had been procured; omitting to establish signals of departure and progress between the main army and the detachment; and, lastly, by

[1] Narrative of British Campaigns in America.

directing that the different parts of the operation should take place *simultaneously*—in direct contradiction to the well-known maxim, that, "a *demonstration*, made on an enemy's line of battle, and intended to draw his attention from points destined to attack, must (to fulfil that intention) "*precede the main operation.*"[1]

4th. The conduct of Lambert, in whom the casualties of the 8th had vested the command of the army, was marked throughout with great circumspection and judgement. Though deciding, on the 9th, to forbear all farther attempts on New Orleans, and to make good a retreat to the shipping as soon and as safely as was possible, he so contrived to manage the business, as to give no indication to his enemy of such intention; and even impressed him with a suspicion that "availing himself of the Bienvenu or the Sumonville, he might yet turn his left flank, and carry the city by surprise,"[2] an idea which may, perhaps, best explain Jackson's inactivity after his decisive battle of the 8th of January.

[1] Narrative of British Campaigns in America.
[2] Latour's Memoir.

APPENDIX.

APPENDIX.

[No. 1.]

Plan of Campaign.

THE time at which we had reason to expect an ascendency on Lake Ontario, has arrived. If our hopes on that head be fulfilled, though but for a short period, we must avail ourselves of the circumstance, and give to the campaign a new and increased activity. For this purpose, our forces on the Ontario should be concentrated; because neither section of them, as now located, will be competent to any important object. The point of concentration is more doubtful.

1st. If at Fort George, our utmost success can but give us the command of the peninsula, which, if Harrison succeed against Malden, will be of diminished interest, both as respects us and the enemy; to us, because Malden will more completely cover our western frontier, and control the savages, than Forts George and Erie; to the enemy, because Malden lost, our inroad on the peninsula will but have the effect of *shortening*, not of *dividing*, their line of defence; in a word, success at this point, will not give to the campaign a character of decisive advantage.

2d. If, on the other hand, we make Sackett's Harbor the point of concentration, Kingston may be made our object of attack; which, by the way, will but be returning to the plan of operations prescribed to General Dearborn. This post is one of great importance to the enemy, and will no doubt be defended with much obstinacy, and with all the resources which can be safely drawn from other points. That it may

be taken by a joint application of our naval and military means, is not, however, to be questioned. The enclosed diagram, will show the number and character of the enemy's defences. His batteries marked No. 1, cannot be sustained but by his fleet. These carried, he is open to a descent at Nos. 2 and 3. If he divides his force between the two, we oppose one half of his strength with the whole of ours. If he concentrates at No. 2, we seize No. 3, and command both the town and the shipping. If he concentrates at No. 3, we occupy No. 2, and with nearly the same result.

Contemporaneously with this operation, another may be made on the side of Lake Champlain, indicating an intention of attacking Montreal and its dependencies, and really attacking them, if to save Kingston, these posts have been materially weakened.

3d. A different operation to which our means may be competent, would be a movement from Sackett's Harbor to Madrid, on the St. Lawrence. At this place the river may, as I am informed, be most easily crossed. The ground opposite to it, is said to be a narrow bluff, skirted by the river on one side, and on the other, by a swamp of considerable extent and difficult passage. This gained and fortified, the fleet continuing to command the water-line from the head of the river to Ogdensburgh, and Lake St. Francis occupied by a few gun-boats and barges, the army may march on Montreal in concert with General Hampton. The only natural difficulty, in the execution of this measure, will be found in crossing a branch of Grand river, which, though generally deep, may, at this season, be fordable, or safely passed in rafts, covered by our artillery.

Under the preceding statements, it is respectfully submitted whether it will not be most advisable to make Sackett's Harbor the point of concentration, and leave to the commanding General an election (to be determined by circumstances) between the two plans, suggested under the 2d and 3d heads.

Approved 23d July, 1813.

JOHN ARMSTRONG.

Secretary of War to General Wilkinson.

August 8th, 1813.

The main objection to any plan which should carry our operations wide of Kingston, and westward of it, is, that, in the event of its success, it leaves the strength of the enemy unbroken; but wounding the tail of the lion, and, of course, not calculated to hasten the termination of the war, either by increasing our own vigor, or by materially diminishing that of the enemy. Kingston is the great depot of his resources; and so long as he retains this, and keeps open his communication with the sea, he will not want the means of multiplying his naval and other defences, and of reinforcing and renewing the war in the west. Kingston, therefore, as well on grounds of policy, as of military principle, presents the first and great object of the campaign.

[No. 2.]

Secretary of War to General Hampton.

September 25th and 28th, 1813.

Commodore Chauncey left the harbor on the 18th with the intention of running up to Fort George, and covering the transportation of the troops from that point to this. On the 21st he had not arrived—the effect, as I suppose, of adverse winds. This circumstance will necessarily bring with it a delay in the execution of our joint operations, and indicate the propriety of your not advancing beyond Malone, or the Four Corners, until you have advice of Wilkinson's movement. An express can reach you in thirty hours, and enable you to gain the village of Coghnawaga, as early as may be proper.

The position you have taken, is better calculated to keep up the enemy's doubts with regard to your point of attack,

than any other. Hold it fast till we approach you. In the present state of the campaign, we ought to run no *risks* by *separate attacks*, when *combined ones* are *practicable* and *sure*. Had you been able to have broken the head of Sir George's defences, and seized St. Johns, it would have embarrassed his knightship; but on the whole, the western movement is to be preferred, because, in it, there are *safety* and *concert;* and, in the meantime, enough to render necessary his attention to different points, and thus keep his forces in a state of division.

[No. 3.]

By command of the General, who is too much indisposed to write, I have the honor to send you the subjoined report of the movements of this division from the 19th of September to the 28th of October, both days included.

19th of September. Troops assembled at Cumberland Head, consisting of four thousand infantry, one squadron of dragoons and of artillery, one 12-pounder, one howitzer, and eight 6-pounders. Embarked the infantry in boats, the artillery and horse sent by land. Arrived at Chazy about midnight. Elite detached under Majors Snelling and Hamilton, to Odel-town, to surprise two British pickets, forming Prevost's advanced posts; one of these, stationed in the village, the other, near it, on the lake shore. Both parties of the elite misled by their guides. Snelling, finding himself off the track leading to the picket on the shore, pushed for the other, in the town, and killed or captured nearly the whole of it. Hamilton arrived soon after, and soon after him the army.

20th. Examining our new position, we found in our front, a hemlock swamp of great extent, (behind which lay Acadie,) the position the General aimed at; on our left, the St. Lawrence, with Prevost's main body; on our right, the Sorel, with

the posts St. John and Chamblée, and a strong regiment under Col. Taylor, commanding on the Isle Aux Noix, covered by three gun-boats, carrying each a heavy gun. The roads through the swamp, carefully abbatied and occupied by Canadian militia, presented serious difficulties, which would not have prevented us from advancing and removing obstructions, as we could, but for a *scarcity of water*, so great as made it necessary to send back our horses and draught cattle to Champlain. From this cause, a council of war unanimously decided that this route be given up, and that of Chateaugay taken in its stead.

21st. Began our march this afternoon for Four Corners.

25th. Arrived at that village, distant twenty-five miles from St. Regis, and forty from Coghnawaga—the latter said to be within ten miles of Montreal.

26th. Employed in improving our communication with Plattsburgh.

4th of October. Road finished to-day—quite a turnpike. During the afternoon, the camp of the elite was smartly attacked by a British, Canadian, and Indian party. Speedily routed and driven off to their camp, about twelve or fourteen miles from this place, where they are busy in obstructing the road. Two of our men killed, Lieutenant Nash and a private, both of the 33d regiment.

12th. Several deserters came in to-day. One of them, a native of New England, gives a very clear account of the force and positions, past and present, of the enemy. Chateaugay route, no defence upon it till we took our present position. Detachments have since been sent to form two lines of defence, both on the western side of the Chateaugay; the one six miles southward of the confluence of English river and Chateaugay, the other, about the same distance northward of it. The works at both places, when finished, will consist of heavy abbaties, flanked by block-houses.

18th. Another deserter came in to-day. Gives the following account of the enemy's strength on each line :—

Front, or southern line, no regulars	. . . .	350
Rear, or 2d line—Detachment of the 13th regiment	.	300
De Meuron's do.	. . . .	200
Robenson's fencibles	. . .	150
Imbodied militia	. . . .	700
Total,	. .	1600

19th. The preceding statement showing the present weakness of the enemy, and rendering probable his increasing strength, if left undisturbed, the General believed it to be his duty to break him down without loss of time, and therefore began a march on his first line, on the 20th. His conclusion was, that, if Prevost was unable, from want of force, to check the movement, there had arisen that condition of things, which, as he understood the plan of campaign, permitted, if it did not enjoin, an attack on Montreal.

21st. General Izzard, with the elite and one regiment of the line, began his march early in the morning, with orders to turn the obstructed parts of the road, and drive off such Indians, or other out-lying parties of the enemy, as he might find in his way; while the main body, preceded by an advanced guard, and a strong working party, took the road along the bank of the river. The two corps met at Spears's, (eighteen miles,) and arrived at the junction of the Outarde and the Chateaugay, in the evening of the 22d. We had now got over twenty-four miles of the forty which separated us from Coghnawaga, and with but little annoyance from the enemy. Besides, we now found ourselves in an open country with a good road before us.

23d and 24th. Were employed in improving the road in our rear, and making it practicable for the artillery and baggage, which were now brought up. The enemy's first line of defence (as we had understood before leaving the Four Corners) was short and straight, its left covered by the river, its front abbatied, and its right resting on a wood, occupied by a few Abanaqui Indians. In the rear of his left was a good fording place, commanded by a block-house, reported as not yet

finished. The enemy's entire force on this line did not exceed three hundred and fifty combatants, altogether Canadian and Indian, and commanded by a militia colonel, (De Sallaberry.)

25th. The plan of attack adopted by the General, was to detach Colonel Purdy with the elite and 1st brigade, forming the most efficient part of the army, across the river; and, by a night march, gain the fording place on the left of the enemy's line, recross the river at that point, and, at dawn of day, attack the enemy's rear; while Izzard's brigade, under his own direction, should pursue the road, and, at the same hour, attack it in front. The whole of this plan miscarried shamefully; Purdy's column, probably misled, fell into an ambuscade, and was quickly beaten and routed; and that of Izzard, after a few discharges, was ordered to retreat.

28th. The two brigades again united, when, with the sanction of a council of war, they returned to the Four Corners.

W. KING, *Adjutant-General.*

[No. 4.]

Secretary of War to General Wilkinson.

September 20th, 1813.

In the haste with which my letter by Major Lee was written, I omitted to notice your suggestion, that "the main body of the enemy, (4,000 men,) leaving to Yeo and the fleet the defence of Kingston, may follow you, and fall upon your rear," &c. Such an event is, in my opinion, highly improbable, and decidedly impossible, if Chauncey put himself in a position to command both channels, as he intends to do. But again: what chance in the game (should the contingency you anticipate happen) could be more propitious to our views, since, in executing his purpose, the enemy must necessarily forego all the advantages given him by his fortress and his fleet, and con-

sent to a field-fight with a force double his own? In such a case, therefore, your course is obvious; turn upon and beat him, and follow up your blows till you get possession of Kingston. You will thus literally fulfil the orders you have received, and merit the baton of a field-marshal.

[No. 5.]

Colonel W. Scott to the Secretary of War.

GEORGETOWN, *December* 31*st*, 1813.

I left Fort George on the 13th of October last, by order of Major-General Wilkinson with the whole of the regular troops of that garrison, and was relieved by Brigadier-General McClure, with a body of the New York detached militia. Fort George, as a field-work, might be considered as *complete at that period.* It was garnished with ten pieces of artillery, (which number might easily have been increased from the spare ordnance at the opposite fort,) with an ample supply of fixed ammunition, &c., as the enclosed receipt for those articles will exhibit.

Fort Niagara, on the 14th October, was under the immediate command of Captain Leonard, 1st artillery, who, beside his own company, had Captain Read's, of the same regiment, together with such of General McClure's brigade as had refused to cross the river. Lieutenant-Colonels Flemming, Bloom, and Dobbins, of the militia, had successively been in command of this fort by order of the Brigadier-General, but I think neither of them was present at the above period. Major-General Wilkinson, in his order to me for the removal of the regular troops on that frontier, excepted the two companies of the 1st artillery, then at Fort Niagara. And under the supposition that I should meet water transport for my detachment at the mouth of the Genesee river, I had

his orders to take with me the whole of the convalescents left in the different hospitals by the regiments which had accompanied him. This order I complied with.

[No. 6.]

General L. Cass to the Secretary of War.

WILLIAMSVILLE, *January* 12*th*, 1813.

I passed this day the ruins of Buffalo. It exhibits a scene of distress and destruction, such as I have never before witnessed. The events which have recently transpired in this quarter have been so astonishing and unexpected, that I have been induced to make some inquiry into their causes and progress; and, doubting whether you have received any correct information upon the subject, I now trouble you with the detail.

The fall of Niagara has been owing to the most criminal negligence. The force in it was fully competent to its defence. The commanding officer, Captain Leonard, it is confidently said, was at his own house, three miles from the fort, and all the officers appear to have rested in as much security as though no enemy was near them. Captains Rodgers and Hampton, both of the 24th, had companies in the fort. Both of them were absent from it. Their conduct ought to be strictly investigated. I am also told that Major Wallace, of the 5th, was in the fort. He escaped, and is now at Erie. The circumstances attending the destruction of Buffalo, you will have learned before this reaches you. But the force of the enemy has been greatly magnified. From the most careful examination, I am satisfied that not more than six hundred and fifty men of regulars, militia and Indians, landed at Black Rock. To oppose these, we had from two thousand five hundred to three thousand militia. All, except very few of them,

behaved in the most cowardly manner. They fled without discharging a musket. The enemy continued on this side of the river until Saturday. All their movements betrayed symptoms of apprehension. A vast quantity of property was left in the town uninjured, and the Ariel, which lies four miles above, upon the beach, is safe. Since the 1st inst., they have made no movement. They continue in the possession of Niagara, and will probably retain it until a force competent to its reduction arrives in its vicinity.

[No. 7.]

The pretences set up by the General, in vindication of his disobedience, were a want of food for men, forage for cattle and horses, and means of transporting more of the former, than each soldier could carry on his back. The testimony given on Wilkinson's trial, in relation to these assertions, is as follows:—

General Bissel deposeth—"That he reached the Four Corners with his regiment, on the 15th of November, from St. Regis—that the marching was generally dry, the roads frozen, and part of them sandy—that, for a few miles through the woods, the frost, in some places, yielded to loaded wagons—that he had a number of horses with his regiment, but found no difficulty in procuring supplies for them, his quartermaster purchasing a considerable quantity of hay and corn, within three miles of the Four Corners."

Colonel Thomas, quartermaster-general of Hampton's army, deposeth—"That there was always on hand full supplies of hard bread, flour, salt pork, and beef, and beef cattle with the army; and that he was always competent to furnish means of transportation for said army, wherever it might be ordered to move, as well after as before General Wilkinson's

order to General Hampton to join the army on the St. Lawrence."

Major Wadsworth, issuing commissary, deposeth—"That he had constantly a full supply for the troops, of hard bread, flour, salt pork, and beef; and after the 1st of October, constantly with the army, a considerable number of beef cattle. About the 10th of November, when the division moved from Chateaugay (Four Corners) to Plattsburgh, there was in deposite forty-five days' provision of bread and flour, a considerable quantity of salt meat, and at the Four Corners and its vicinity, seven or eight hundred head of fat cattle."

Captain Conklin, of the 4th U. S. infantry, deputy quartermaster, being asked by the court what time it would have taken to remove the division, with its provision and baggage, from the Four Corners to St. Regis, on the St. Lawrence, deposeth—"That he did not exactly know the distance between the two places, but if twenty-five miles, as reported, it would have taken three days."—See Wilkinson's Trial.

[No. 8.]

Minutes of a council of war, holden at Sackett's Harbor, August 26th, 1813. Present, Major-General Wilkinson, Major-General Lewis, Commodore Chauncey, Brigadier-General Brown, and Brigadier-General Swartwout, quartermaster-general.

Major-General Wilkinson states to the council the views of the government, and the relative situation of affairs. The conquest of the province of Upper Canada, comprises the instructions of the Executive of the United States for the service of the army; the impending campaign, and the reduction of Kingston, by a direct attack, or indirect movement, embraces the previsory object of those instructions.

From the best information possessed, the main force of the enemy in Upper Canada, opposed to this command, is divided between the head of Lake Ontario, Kingston, and Prescott—say, at the first place, two thousand regular troops, beside militia and auxiliary savages; at Kingston, three thousand six hundred and fifty regulars, and one thousand five hundred militia, together with the naval force when in port, estimated at one thousand, or twelve hundred men; and at Prescott, eight hundred and fifty men: making a total of at least nine thousand combatants. But this force is so divided, that not more than four thousand men can be brought to act seasonably with effect at any given point, unless we should attack Kingston; in which case, by the addition of seamen and marines, the number may be increased to six thousand, for the defence of the various, extensive, and widely-detached works of that depot.

The whole present effective force of the army of this district, may be estimated at seven thousand four hundred combatants, exclusive of the naval department. But this force may, it is expected, by the recovery of the sick, and the junction of recruits, be augmented to nine thousand, exclusive of militia, on whom no solid reliance can be placed, by the 20th of next month.

Our army, at present, occupies the following places, viz: At Fort George and Niagara, three thousand five hundred; at Oswego, one hundred; at this place, two thousand; and at Burlington, Lake Champlain, four thousand. This distraction of our force weakens our hands, and puts it out of our power to make any decisive stroke to break the strength, and impair the vigor, of the enemy. Indeed, the division on Lake Champlain is too remote to afford us prompt assistance in this quarter, should it become necessary, but it may operate a powerful diversion on the side of Montreal, where it is believed the enemy rests his defence chiefly on his organized militia.

The season is wasting rapidly, and the honor and interests of the nation imperiously demand, that a deadly blow should

be struck somewhere. In the meantime, the enemy continues to reinforce his posts in this quarter, and to strengthen his position in the neighborhood of Fort George, where the commander-in-chief is now acting in person. As the success of every operation will depend on the conjunct exertions of the army and navy, it is required by the Executive that a cordial co-operation, and a perfectly good understanding, should be maintained between the commanders of those departments respectively.

Having submitted this statement of facts to the consideration of the council, Major-General Wilkinson requests their sentiments on the following points:—

1st. To wait, in our present positions, a combat between the rival squadrons, for the supremacy on the lake.

2d. To assemble a sufficient force at Fort George to cut up the enemy in that quarter—then to descend to this place, call the division from Champlain, incorporate the whole, and make a direct attack on Kingston.

3d. To concentrate all the troops on the lake, in this vicinity, order the division on Lake Champlain to make a feint on Montreal, or to carry a real attack against it, should circumstances warrant, and then, with the troops assembled here, to reduce Kingston, and proceed against Montreal, should the season permit; or,

4th. To rendezvous the whole of the troops on the lake, in this vicinity, and, in co-operation with the squadron, make a bold feint on Kingston, slip down the St. Lawrence, lock up the enemy in our rear, to starve and surrender, or oblige him to follow us without artillery, baggage, or provisions, and, eventually, to lay down his arms; to sweep the St. Lawrence of armed vessels, and, in concert with the division under Major-General Hampton, take possession of Montreal.

Upon the various propositions submitted by the commander-in-chief to the council, consisting of the general officers of the division, and Commodore Chauncey, of the navy, they are of opinion—

1st. That it is not necessary to await the result of a conflict

between the hostile squadrons, as the operations of the army, in the event of the adoption of either of these propositions, will not depend on a co-operation with the fleet, farther than to secure the passage of the troops into the St. Lawrence.

2d. The second proposition is rejected, because the object appears to be a partial one, as far as relates to the proposed operation against the division in the neighborhood of Fort George. The loss of time, also, would probably render it difficult to carry an attack against Kingston this campaign.

3d. This proposition is also considered as a partial operation, and one for which the force upon this lake might prove inadequate.

4th. The last and fourth plan meets the approbation of the council. The object appears feasible, and, if accomplished, the upper country must fall, of course, being incapable of subsisting the enemy's force for any length of time; and the possession of Montreal will certainly destroy the line of communication between the upper and lower province. The feint on Kingston is reserved for farther consideration.

(Signed,) MORGAN LEWIS,
ISAAC CHAUNCEY,
ROBERT SWARTWOUT,
JACOB BROWN.

A true copy from the original, in my possession.
R. H. McPHERSON, *Captain and Secretary.*

The following note, in the hand-writing of General Wilkinson, and signed by him, is endorsed on the margin of the document, of which this is a copy:—

"PLATTSBURGH, *March 1st*, 1814.

"Having just taken command of the army, and being, consequently, a stranger to the force and position of the enemy, the information (offered to the council) on these points was chiefly derived from Major-General Lewis, and Brigadier-General Brown.

(Signed,) "JAMES WILKINSON, *Major-General*."

[No. 9.]

WAR DEPARTMENT,
Sackett's Harbor, Sept. 22d, 1813.

DEAR GENERAL: I this morning wrote a short letter to you, acknowledging the receipt of your despatches of the 16th, 17th, and 18th inst., but from interruption, was unable to say more than a few words on the point to which you call my attention, and request my advice. To supply this defect, I subjoin the following observations:—

The facts which appear to embarrass you, are precisely those which, in my judgement, leave no doubt of the course you ought to pursue; for if the British force, now investing Fort George, amounts to three thousand combatants, exclusive of militia and Indians, and if Yeo and the fleet be cooperating with it, the defence of Kingston must necessarily be left to a garrison not exceeding twelve hundred men; many of whom, according to General Brown's statement, are broken down by service or intemperance, and fit only for light garrison duty—a state of things most propitious to our objects, and one of which we ought immediately to avail ourselves; for, Kingston captured, the whole of the upper province, westward of the mouth of the St. Lawrence, with all the British force it contains, naval or military, falls with it. Compared with an acquisition giving such results, of how little importance would be a victory gained on the peninsula, limited in its effects to the ground on which it occurs, leaving Kingston untouched, and Yeo to his ordinary skill and activity on the water?

But, again: What solid reasons are there for believing, that were your project adopted, a battle or a victory would necessarily or even probably follow? Will the advanced stage of the season justify such a belief? By your own admission, twenty-one days will be indispensable for preparation, which, counting from the 25th inst. (the day on which you may receive this letter) will bring the commencement of your enter-

prise to the 13th of October—a date at which the weather of this climate is always doubtful, and often such, as of itself will be sufficient to put an end to all military operations. But, weather aside, will the enemy fight a decisive battle on your invitation, and in direct opposition to what is so obviously his own interest and policy? This is not to be expected from an old soldier, acquainted with that rule of the art which forbids him to fight, but on motives and calculations entirely his own; and still less from Prevost, who appears to have perfectly understood, that, by keeping up the war on the peninsula, he can most easily and certainly secure Kingston and Montreal, the two great and vital points in his line of defence. Admitting, however, for a moment, that De Rottenburgh, the commander de facto, is an ignorant and unprincipled blockhead, regardless of the wisdom and experience of others, totally indifferent to the interests of the nation that gives him bread, and solicitous only to illustrate his own name by a battle, what reason is there for supposing that such a man, at the head of three thousand veterans, with a cloud of militia and Indians at his disposal, would suffer himself and his army to be cut up or captured en masse, as you expect he would, without inflicting blows nearly as numerous and fatal as those he received. On the other hand, supposing the character of this commander to be just the reverse of all that is said of him above, and that, sufficiently sensible of the duty of yielding personal considerations to national objects and interests, he should adopt the wise and wary system, of just fighting enough to preserve the morale of his own troops, while he drew yours after him step by step, into the gorges and defiles of the mountains—what in this case would be your resource—a battle or a retreat? And, in either event, what becomes of the greater objects of the campaign? In this case, as in that of Dearborn, they must be postponed for another year.

From these views of the subject, there is no difficulty in coming to the conclusion, that nothing forbids, and everything invites, to a prompt and steady prosecution of the plan of operations already prescribed to you—concentrating, as speedily

as possible, the two divisions at the Harbor, and, in conjunction with the fleet, attacking Kingston.

(Signed,) JOHN ARMSTRONG.

Major-Gen. WILKINSON.

P. S. A word or two, in relation to things you must soon leave behind you. I have already said that Fort George is to be retained, for, beside depriving the enemy of a convenient harbor, its character and position will furnish useful means for checking any attempt made by the enemy on our frontier. Flank movements, including the passage of a river like the Niagara, with a hostile fortress on each side of it, cannot be made but at great risk. My letter will give the extent of the regular force to be left in the fort, and do not forget that our old friend, Moses Porter, is to succeed you in the command of the fort and its dependencies. If P. B. Porter and his associates do not over-rate their popularity, and are able to do even half as much as they promise, the frontier will have nothing to fear from your removal. Should there, however, be any doubt of this, call for another militia brigade in addition to McClure's, before you set out. You already have a copy of the unexecuted order given to Dearborn with respect to the removal of Leonard from the command of Fort Niagara. The authority of this still exists, and should be immediately exercised.

Hoping soon to see you, I am, &c., J. A.

[No. 10.]

Memorandum sent by Wilkinson to Chauncey, and Chauncey's answer.

The main body of e division of the army at this point, has sailed to join that at Sackett's Harbor, at the head of the

St. Lawrence, with the design to reduce Kingston and Prescott, and to proceed against Montreal.

The main body of the enemy's force is, in this vicinity, at the head of the lake and in York, leaving Kingston very weak.

The enemy's squadron, beaten and forced to the head of the lake, is not in a situation to attempt the regaining of Kingston harbor, while the American squadron keeps an eye upon it.

Under these circumstances, will it be for the interests of the service, that the American squadron should accompany the flotilla with the troops, or shall it watch the British squadron, effect its destruction, and prevent the sudden transport of the division of the enemy by a rapid movement by water to reinforce Kingston.

It strikes me, that, in the first case, the enemy being apprized of our intention, by our movement, which cannot be concealed, may, with the aid of their squadron, reach Kingston before our troops are imbodied and organized for the attack; and thus the reduction of the place may be spun out to the consumption of the season, and, of course, the main design must fail.

In the second case, while the American squadron blocks up that of the enemy at the head of the lake, the flotilla will enjoy a free sea, and the British, by being cut off from transport by water, will be thrown back a month in their arrival at Kingston; long before which period, the place must be taken, and our army landed on Montreal island—no act of God intervening to thwart our intentions.

FORT GEORGE, *Oct. 1st*, 1813.

In this state of things, Major-General Wilkinson requests of Commodore Chauncey, his opinions and advice.

U. S. SHIP PIKE, OFF NIAGARA,
October 1st, 1813.

DEAR SIR: The reasons you assign, in your memorandum, why the American squadron should remain in this vicinity,

in *preference to accompanying the flotilla down the lake*, are so *conclusive*, and *correspond so exactly with my own ideas and wishes upon the subject, that I have no others to offer.* I will barely observe, that my best exertions shall be used to keep the enemy in check in this part of the lake, or effect his destruction. Yet, *with my utmost exertions and greatest vigilance, he may* (when favored by a strong westerly wind) *slip past me in the night, and get* 18 *or* 20 *hours the start of me down the lake, before I can discover his movement.* If that should be the case, I shall lose no time in following him, with so much celerity, as to prevent his interrupting you in your operation upon Kingston.

(Signed) ISAAC CHAUNCEY.

That a man of Wilkinson's habits, should have yielded to a revery like this, may not appear extraordinary; but that any project, impracticable in itself; giving to the fleet a false position; diverting it from the important duty of covering the descent of an entire division of the army from Fort George to Sackett's Harbor; and directly exposing this to capture or destruction—should have met the high approbation and cordial welcome it received from the naval commander, is a problem less easily solved. "Your argument," says this functionary, "is *conclusive*, and *so exactly meets my ideas and wishes on the subject, that I have no others to offer.*" Yet, in the moment of this *applause and adoption*, the commodore is careful to add—"*Do what I may*, (*and my best exertions and greatest vigilance shall be employed*,) *the enemy, if favored with a westerly wind, may pass me in the night*, and *get eighteen or twenty miles start of me down the lake, before I discover his movement*"—an opinion entirely sustained by the event. Fortunately, Yeo, in making good his retreat to Kingston, kept the northern side of the lake; and thus left the boats carrying the division (much dispersed, and wholly defenceless) without molestation. Had any accident given a more southern direction to his course, the whole division would no doubt have been sacrificed.

[No. 11.]

"The general impression on my mind at the time was, that the Secretary was in favor of attacking Kingston, and that General Wilkinson was for going to Montreal."—Gen. Lewis's testimony given on Wilkinson's trial.—(*See Wilkinson's memoirs.*) "On General Wilkinson's arrival from Niagara at Sackett's Harbor, the Secretary of War gave it as his opinion, that no time should be lost in moving the troops to Grenadier island, so as to meet those coming from Niagara; and, with our united strength, advance *directly upon Kingston*, before the enemy could have time to concentrate for the defence of that position. The Secretary appeared to believe, that the attack upon Kingston, would not delay us long, as Commodore Chauncey had now the command of the lake, and could co-operate. *General Wilkinson differed with the Secretary in opinion. He was opposed to attacking Kingston;* and appeared disposed to delay the embarkation of the troops at the harbor, for the purpose of perfecting the organization with the troops from Niagara—stating that he had ordered the corps from that place to Henderson's harbor, with a view to that object."—General Brown's statement of a conversation between the Secretary of War and Gen. Wilkinson, on the 4th of October, 1813.

[No. 12.]

Extract of a letter from Gen. Wilkinson to the Secretary of War, dated Oct. 18th, 1813.

"The diminution of our force by disease and various casualities, and more especially, the uncertainty of the period of our movement against Montreal, render it necessary

in my judgement, that you should revoke the order of march you have given to General Hampton, and that he should be directed to march for Morrisville, as rapidly as may be consistent with the health of his troops. This proposition is founded on the presumption, that we make the reduction of Kingston, and the conquest of the upper province, the first objects of our operation."

WAR DEPARTMENT,
October 19*th*, 1813.

I received your letter of yesterday, and should have answered it more promptly, but that business of the south and west required my immediate attention.

When, on the 4th inst., you returned from Fort George, we had the prospect of a speedy concentration of our force at this point; the Niagara division had sailed on the 30th ult.; the enemy's principal force occupied a cantonment between Lakes Erie and Ontario; his fleet was at the head of the lake, and his garrison at Kingston, reduced to seven or eight hundred men. Under these circumstances, it was no doubt wise to decide, as we did, that our first attack should be carried against that place: but do these circumstances any longer exist? The expected concentration is but now effected, (18th October) a reinforcement of 1500 men has been thrown into Kingston; the British fleet has got into port there, and our force, from disease and other casualties is, according to your statement, diminished and diminishing. To reinstate and augment this, it is now proposed to order General Hampton from his present position at Chateaugay to Morrisville, on the St. Lawrence. These places are distant upward of one hundred miles. A march of such length at this season of the year, and in the present condition of the roads, loaded as he is with a train of artillery, with means of subsistence, and with tents and baggage, cannot be performed under fifteen days; to which must be added, the time necessary for giving the order, for settling the arrangements preliminary to such a

movement, and for making also the subsequent one from Morrisville to the mouth of Gaunoqui; all of which would probably protract the moment of junction till the 15th of November. Admonished as we are, by the storms which have assailed us for ten days past, and which have not yet ceased, I cannot but think, that a period so late, would of itself be fatal to the project.

Other circumstances lead to the same conclusion. Beginning our operation from the mouth of the Gaunoqui, we shall have a march of twenty-four miles to.Kingston, and through a country covered with woods, destitute of inhabitants, and pervious only by two roads, which, without any interruption from the enemy, are represented as nearly impassable at present. This movement (unlike that originally projected) cannot be made without the aid of horses, and a less number of these than six hundred, including the 2d regiment of dragoons, is, I understand, deemed insufficient. Now, these must be fed, and their provender drawn from this place, as the country between Gravelly Point and Putneyville affords none, and interposes a swampy desert, which shuts us out from the supplies of Rossie and Rayville, &c. An important question arises here—can the necessary forage be obtained from this neighborhood? The quartermaster-general says "it cannot, that it must be carted from Lowville (40 miles distant) and transported hence by water." These facts on your plan, menace our operations against Kingston with a delay, which would probably surround us with all the embarrassments of a Canadian winter, and extinguish every hope of grasping the other, the safer, and the greater object below. I call it the safer and the greater object, because—At Montreal, you find the weaker place, and the smaller force to encounter; at Montreal, you meet a fresh, unexhausted, efficient reinforcement of four thousand men; at Montreal, you approach your own resources, and establish between you and them, an easy and expeditious intercourse; at Montreal, you occupy a point which must be gained, in carrying your attacks home to the purposes of the war, and which, if

seized now, will save one campaign; at Montreal, you hold a position which completely severs the enemy's line of operations, which shuts up the Ottowa, as well as the St. Lawrence, against him, and which, while it restrains all below, withers and perishes all above itself.

These, General, are the thoughts which present themselves on your proposition, which I understand, as abandoning for this campaign the proposed attack on Montreal. I am entirely disposed to listen to all that can be said on the other side of the question, but at present, the reasons assigned leave me no doubt of the policy of pursuing, promptly and firmly, the plan already indicated, and which, beside the approbation of the President, has received the sanction of a council of war. I am, &c.,

JOHN ARMSTRONG.

Major-General WILKINSON.

Extract from General Wilkinson's letter of the 19*th of October*, 1813, *to the Secretary of War.*

"Personal considerations would make me prefer a visit to Montreal, to an attack on Kingston, but before I abandon this attack, which, by my instructions, I am ordered to make, it is necessary to my justification that you should, by the authority of the President, direct the operations of the army under my command, particularly against Montreal."

The Secretary of War to General Wilkinson.

WAR DEPARTMENT,
October 20*th*, 1813.

I received your letter of yesterday by Major Lee. You appear to have written it under an impression that your instructions of August last made a direct attack upon Kingston unavoidable. A copy of these instructions is before me, and in the last paragraph of them we find a summary of their substance. It is as follows: "After this exposition, it is unnecessary to add, that, in conducting the present campaign, you

will make *Kingston your principal object*, and that you will choose, as circumstances may indicate, between a *direct* and an *indirect* attack on that post." Both modes of attack are slightly detailed in these orders, and a preference given to the latter, but without at all infringing your right of choice, or in any degree lessening your responsibility. Nor am I now at liberty to change the ground of these instructions, since the only effect of this would be, to substitute my opinion for yours. The former has not, however, been withheld; it has been given freely and fully, and is yet unshaken by any consideration presented to my mind.

As we are now about to part, it may be proper that I should subjoin to what I have said in favor of a movement on Montreal, a short statement of my objection to a direct attack on Kingston.

1st. If its garrison consists of four thousand of the best troops of the enemy, (as you suggest,) your attack will fail.

2d. If your attack fails, your retreat is impracticable.

3d. Your descent must necessarily be made above or below the town, on the water's edge, and within a short distance of your object. If made below the town, your fleet cannot cover it; if made above the town, it must be done in presence of the enemy, and within stroke of his fleet, and that he will think the object sufficient to justify the risk cannot be doubted. Besides, an approach on this side, however successful, leaves to the enemy the means of escaping.

4th. The experiment already made of the lake navigation is not encouraging. Though pressed by no enemy, other than the weather, the army has not been able to reach Grenadier island, but in broken order, and with considerable loss. On your plan, they have eighteen other miles to go on the open lake, and much of this distance under the eye of the British fleet. Is it probable, that our *scows* will be able to navigate this remaining distance, (at a season, and under circumstances so unfavorable,) in better order, or with less loss?

(Signed,) JOHN ARMSTRONG.

[No. 13.]

Proofs of Wilkinson's drunkenness, while conducting the army down the St. Lawrence.

"On or about the 6th of November, 1813, (the night the American troops passed Ogdensburgh and Prescott,) having received orders to muffle the oars, and leave men enough barely sufficient to man the boats, we marched the remainder by land below Ogdensburgh. When we arrived, as we thought, near the place where we were to meet the boats, (say a mile below Ogdensburgh,) we halted at a small house near the river (D. Thorp's); and while there, discovered a boat approaching the shore. Major Forsyth hailed the crew, and on explanation was informed it was Gen. Wilkinson's boat. The major, myself, and others, met the General at the water's edge, and asked if he wished to come on shore. Indicating that he did, Forsyth and myself took him by the arms to assist him out of the boat, and up the bank. We found him most abominably intoxicated, and hurried him into the house; during which time, he was muttering the most desperate imprecations against the enemy—saying, that if they did not cease firing, he would blow to dust the whole British garrison, and lay waste their country. After seating him on a chair near the fire, the major and myself retired to consult what was best to be done, under the present situation of the commander-in-chief; when we concluded to detail and post a guard near the door of the house, to keep out both citizens and soldiers. I made the detail and posted the sentinel, and soon afterward perceiving the General to nod, and apprehending that he would fall into the fire, I proposed laying him on something like a bedstead that was in the room, and having done so, he was, in a very short time, in a sound sleep. The time to the best of my recollection, at which we received the General, was about two o'clock in the morning. For some time after this occurrence, he was not very accessi-

ble; it was said that he was in bad health."—*Major Birdsal's statement.*

Owin Chatfield deposeth and saith, that, on the night the American army passed Prescott, this deponent went to the house of Daniel Thorp. This deponent farther saith, that Gen. James Wilkinson was there, and in a state of intoxication; and that his deportment, and obscene and vulgar conversation, but too plainly manifested his being in that situation. This deponent farther saith, that the General sung several obscene and vulgar songs; and farther saith not.

(Signed) OWIN CHATFIELD.

Sworn before me at the village of Ogdensburgh, this 17th of July, 1835.

JOHN SCOTT,
Justice of the Peace, &c.

Daniel Thorp deposeth and saith, that he lives about a mile below the village of Ogdensburgh, and that, in the night the American army passed Prescott, Gen. James Wilkinson came to the house of deponent in a state of intoxication, as deponent verily believed at the time, and which he still believes; and that soon after his arrival at deponent's house, the General was put to bed. This deponent farther saith, that the General remained at his house several hours, and that, during his stay there, his behavior was very unlike a gentleman, and his conversation very vulgar and obscene.

(Signed) DANIEL THORP.

Sworn before me, this 18th of July, 1819.

JOHN SCOTT,
Justice of the Peace, &c.

[No. 14.]

No. 1—containing the order intended to be executed.

Letter of the Secretary of War to General Brown, of the 28th of February, 1814.

SIR—It is obviously Prevost's policy, and probably his intention, to re-establish himself on Lake Erie, during the ensuing month. But to effect this, other points of his line must be weakened, and these will be either Kingston or Montreal. If the detachment from the former be great, a moment may occur in which you may do, with the aid of Commodore Chauncey, what I last year intended Pike should have done without aid, and what we now all know was very practicable, viz: to cross the river, or head of the lake, on the ice, and carry Kingston by a coup de main. This is not, however, to be attempted, but under a combination of the following circumstances: practicable roads, good weather, large detachments (made westwardly) on the part of the enemy, and a full and hearty co-operation on the part of our own naval commander. If the enterprise be agreed upon, use the enclosed letter [No. 2] to mask your object, and let no one into your secret but Chauncey.

(Signed,) JOHN ARMSTRONG.

No. 2—intended to deceive the enemy.

SIR—Colonel Scott, who is in nomination as a brigadier, has orders to repair to the Niagara frontier, and to take with him a corps of artillerists, and a battering, and field train, &c.; Major Wood, of the engineers, and Dallaba, of the ordnance, will accompany, or follow him. Four hundred Indians, and about four thousand volunteer militia, are under similar orders. The truth is, that public opinion will no longer tolerate us in permitting the enemy to keep quiet possession of Fort Niagara. Another motive, is the effect which may be expected from the appearance of a large corps on the Niagara,

in restraining the enemy's enterprises westward of that point. But will a corps, so constituted, be able to reduce Niagara? or long impose on an enemy, as well informed as itself? This is not to be expected; whence it follows that the President orders you to assemble means for conveying, with the least possible delay, the brigade you brought from French Mills to Batavia, where other and more detailed orders await you. Our advices from M. state that large detachments are under orders for K—westwardly, and that no intention exists of attacking the harbor. Should, however, new movements from M. indicate a different design, they will be promptly known to General ——, and will produce a counter movement.

[No. 15.]

It will be remembered, that after abandoning the enterprise on Montreal, General Wilkinson cantoned the troops for the winter, at French Mills, on Salmon river, whence he soon after reported, that "the army was now safe from the enemy, and snug against the weather, but somewhat prone to disease from bad aliments." Nor, according to a second report, was his personal condition at all better; for in this he says: "Though willing to die at my post, I am not so when unable to draw my sword: repose and retirement have become necessary to my health, and the re-establishment of my constitution. I must therefore beg leave to remove my quarters to Albany, leaving Brigadier-General Izzard in the chief command, and giving to him the Four Corners for his station."

It was under these circumstances of acknowledged incompetency for field-service, that the General began a new display of his skill in strategy. The first project to which he invited the attention of the government, was founded on the information of a deserter, who had served at the Isle aux Noix, and

who gave such a description of the defences there, as induced the General to believe that "the fort might be easily taken, in the course of the winter, from Plattsburgh." This plan, if it can be called one, soon gave place to another, and greater. "To counteract," he says, "the effect of the enemy's successes on the Niagara, and the unlooked-for results of General Harrison's campaign, I meditate a contre coup on the positions of the enemy near me, which shall reach the bone. I propose to march, on the 3d or 4th of next month, a column of two thousand men from Chateaugay, and the same number from Plattsburgh, with the necessary attirail and sleighs for transport. The first column to take Hampton's route, and sweep the enemy to the St. Lawrence; then to turn to the right, and march for St. Pierre, where the two columns will form a junction, and proceed against the posts of St. Philip, Acadie, and St. John's, and having beaten, routed, and dispersed the detachments at these defenceless cantonments, then to be governed by circumstances whether to halt and occupy them, [the defenceless cantonments,] or to go on and reduce the Isle aux Noix; or, lastly, to return again."

This is, however, but one half of the plan, and certainly not that half that would reach the bone. Let us then look at the other: "Simultaneously with this movement, [the march by different routes to St. Pierre, and the attack on defenceless cantonments,] four thousand men will cross the St. Lawrence, attack Cornwall, capture, or rout the regular troops there, disperse the militia, fortify, and hold possession of the village, and effectually cut off the intercourse between the two provinces." This, indeed, would have been doing something, but like its predecessor, the plan was only born to die. In a letter to the government, of the 16th of January, he says: "Want of provisions, and other circumstances depending on the season, leave us no expectation of being able to take post in the enemy's territory, (as proposed in my letter of the 7th,) and even menace us with the necessity of a retrograde movement." But as, according to the General's belief, expressed but a fortnight before, "a march to Plattsburgh, and the erec-

tion of huts there, would kill the whole army," he wisely concluded "to burn his boats, send off his sick, wounded, and convalescent, to Plattsburgh, [to die,] and with the residue of the army, (seven thousand men,) steal a march into Canada, take Prescott by surprise or storm, and there, and at Kingston, barrack them for the winter."

Such palpable gasconade and inconsistency could not fail to admonish the government against longer confiding in the discretion of a man, who, finding himself compelled by want of food and the pressure of the season, to relinquish an attack on defenceless cantonments, within striking distance of his own position, could, for a moment, entertain a project of attacking, under the same circumstances, two points, more remote, more strongly fortified, and better garrisoned, than any others in the Upper province of Canada. He was, accordingly, ordered to fall back upon his own resources, and take post at Plattsburgh, where the army was soon and comfortably supplied, and, on the 30th of March, in condition to enter on the execution of the General's last and great labor—the attack of La Cole Mill.

[No. 16.]

Letter from the Secretary of War to the President.

April 31*st*, 1814.

SIR: So long as we had reason to believe that the enemy intended and was in condition to re-establish himself on the Thames, and open anew his intercourse with the Indian tribes of the west, it was, no doubt, proper to give to our naval means a direction which would best obstruct or defeat such movement or designs. An order has been accordingly given by the navy department, to employ the flotilla, in scouring the

shores of the more western lakes, in destroying the enemy's trading establishment at St. Joseph's, and in recapturing Fort Michilimackinac. As, however, our last advices show, that the enemy has no efficient force westward of Burlington bay, and that he has suffered the season of easy and rapid transportation to escape him, it is evident that he means to strengthen himself on the peninsula, and make Fort Erie, which he is now repairing, the western extremity of his line of operation. Under this new state of things, it is respectfully submitted, whether another and better use cannot be made of our flotilla?

In explaining myself, it is necessary to premise that, the garrison of Detroit and Malden included, it will be practicable to assemble on the shores and navigable waters of Lake Erie, five thousand regular troops, and three thousand volunteers and militia, and that measures have been taken to produce this effect on or before the 10th day of June next. Without, however, the aid of naval means, this force will be comparatively inoperative, and necessarily dispersed, but with such aid, competent to great objects.

Lake Erie, on which our dominion is undisputed, furnishes a way scarcely less convenient for approaching the heart of Upper Canada than Lake Ontario. Eight, or even six thousand men, landed in the bay between Point Abino and Fort Erie, and operating either on the line of the Niagara, or more directly (if a more direct route is found) against the British post at the head of Burlington bay, cannot be resisted with effect, without compelling the enemy so to weaken his more eastern posts, as to bring them within reach of our means at Sackett's Harbor and Plattsburgh.

In choosing between this object and that to which the flotilla is now destined, there cannot, I think, be much if any hesitation. Our attack, carried to Burlington and York, interposes a barrier, which completely protects Malden and Detroit—makes doubtful and hazardous the enemy's intercourse with the western Indians—reduces Mackinac to a possession perfectly useless—renders probable the abandonment of Fort Ni-

agara, and takes from the enemy half his motive for continuing the naval conflict on Lake Ontario. On the other hand, take Mackinac, and what is gained, but Mackinac itself.

I have the honor to be, &c.,

(Signed,) JOHN ARMSTRONG.

[No. 17.]

Heads of plan of campaign within District No. 9.

1st. That such portions of the Erie fleet, and of the garrison of Detroit, as the officer commanding may deem necessary for the purpose, be despatched without delay to the western lakes, with orders to attack or capture a British fort or depot, established at Matchedash bay, on Lake Huron; recapture Michilimakinac, and break up such other hostile establishments within these inland seas, as may be practicable.

2d. That all surplus vessels belonging to the fleet, and left at Detroit, be brought down the lake, and employed in transporting the division of the left, its arms, ammunition, subsistence, and baggage, to such point on the Canada shore, as may be indicated; and in such other acts of co-operation with the division, as may be proper or necessary.

3d. That, after landing, the troops be marched, as expeditiously as possible, on the British position at Burlington bay, with orders to seize and fortify that post; and, having thus cut the enemy's line of land communication between York and Fort George, await the arrival and co-operation of the Ontario fleet; which, from statements made by the Secretary of the Navy, will be prepared for action by the middle of June.

4th. Under these circumstances the commanders of the two arms will have within their choice—a speedy invest-

ment of Forts George and Niagara; a rapid descent on Sackett's Harbor; a junction with the brigade at that post, and a direct attack on Kingston. In choosing between these objects, circumstances must govern. The former will enable us to take a new line of operation from Fort George to Lake Simcoe, shutting out the enemy from all direct communication with the western lakes, and thus destroying his means of sustaining his western posts and settlements, and of reinstating his influence over Indian wants and policy. The latter, beside comprising all the advantages of the former, will put an end to all farther naval expenditure on Lake Ontario; give us an uncontested possession of a great proportion of Upper Canada, and enable us to carry our whole concentrated force on Montreal—which, if gained, cannot fail to give to the war a speedy and favorable termination. All which is respectfully submitted.

JOHN ARMSTRONG.

[No. 18.]

"Toward the evening of the 2d, General Ripley appeared to be very much discomposed. He objected to the division made of the transports, and complained that he would not be able to cross with sufficient force; that the principal fighting would be above the fort where he was ordered to land, and that he had seen lights during the night, and smoke during the day, for some time past. General Brown endeavored to satisfy him, but in vain. He (Ripley) tendered his resignation which was not accepted, as the General was inflexibly determined that the army should cross agreeably to the arrangements he had made."—*Gen. Brown's memorandum of occurrences in the campaign of* 1814, *on the Niagara.*

[No. 19.]

Letter from Gen. Miller to Gen. Brown.

20th November, 1818.

My Dear General: Even at this remote period there are disputes respecting the war of the Revolution. It is a lesson to us who have acted in a more recent struggle, so to transmit the occurrences of it, that nothing be left to a future and indistinct remembrance.

The foregoing reflection is one cause of the present letter, but a more immediate motive consists in my dissatisfaction at the unauthorized use which has been made of my name, by those whose views are unfriendly to you, and which, if I remain silent, may induce you to believe that I have taken part against you. If the attempt to show a variance between you and myself has, in this case, been successful, let me disclaim any intentional agency in it, and, at the same time, disclaim any intentional act, wherein my name could be brought against yours.

The best part of that service which has procured me the indulgence of my country, was under your command. The slightest reference to that period, would disprove the possibility of our being found in opposite ranks. If I gave you at that time not only my subordination as a soldier, but my affection and unshaken confidence as a man, should I be likely to withdraw, at a later period, when success had given a final seal to your reputation, what I never withheld while success was doubtful? And nothing has ever occurred since the battle of Niagara, to diminish my attachment to you as a friend, or to lessen my admiration of you as a commander.

During an active part of the defence of Fort Erie, and shortly after Gen. Ripley's return, he requested me to write a letter to some friend of mine at Boston, which might tend to check the tide of opinion then running against him. I en-

tered into his situation, and felt for him as a soldier commonly feels for a brother officer so circumstanced, and, actuated by a wish to repress the extremity of public opinion, I wrote a letter to my friend Mr. Jonathan Howard of Boston, as the friend of Gen. Ripley, but not as your enemy. Gen. Ripley had the perusal of it, and well understood that I did not intend it for publication, (as I had in the margin restricted my friend in the use he might make of it,) and I never expected that Gen. Ripley would have made any farther use of my generosity. But what was my astonishment when I saw in the summer of 1815, in a pamphlet entitled, "Facts and documents respecting the campaign of the Niagara," a paragraph purporting to be an extract of a letter from me.

How far my memory may serve me correctly, I cannot positively say, but I feel disposed to declare my full belief, that the extract published in the above mentioned pamphlet, (which publication I am among the last to approve,) was taken from the draught of a letter, which was at the time offered to me for my signature, and which I refused to sign. I have remained silent all this time in hopes to get possession of my original letter, which has been mislaid or lost by my friend, but not gone into the hands of General Ripley, and which, if found, would, I believe, materially correct that extract.

I beg leave farther to remark, that the extract imputed to me, contains some assertions that I cannot suffer to pass unnoticed. After saying, that "the enemy's artillery was advantageously posted on a hill commanding the plain; the destruction which it dealt through our ranks, suggested the necessity of carrying the heights. This, General Ripley directed to be done with his own brigade. The 21st regiment, which I then commanded, advanced, and charged the battery in front; he led the 23d on their flank. Both these regiments present were less than 700 men; the movement was performed in the most heroic manner by both regiments, and in a few minutes we found ourselves in possession of the whole park, consisting of seven pieces, and the enemy were routed in every direction."

All this, I never did subscribe to. The fact is, that after receiving from yourself, in person, the order to storm and take the enemy's artillery, I obeyed it as soon as possible, with my regiment, (the 21st). The 23d, led by General Ripley, so far from acting simultaneously with the 21st, did not appear on the eminence for half an hour after the 21st was there—some say more.

It was difficult, however, to measure time in such a night scene as that; we could only judge of it by what was done, A small detachment of the 17th, under that meritorious officer, Captain Chum, was at that time acting with the 21st, and thus, consolidated, after a severe conflict, we drove the enemy from his cannon; we took thirty or forty prisoners—secured them in the old church—beat the enemy in two if not more attempts to regain what he had lost, and had a respite sufficient to detach my adjutant, Lieutenant Holding, with a party of men, to roll the captured cannon down the hill toward our friends. General Ripley, in his way coming up, fell in with this party, and, as Lieut. Holding told me, ordered him to desist, to leave the pieces where they were, and to return to the combat, (which was by no means at an end). All this was done before General Ripley gained the eminence, or I never saw the flash of a gun on the heights of Bridgewater. I do not mean to insinuate that General Ripley lost a moment's time unnecessarily, for he was engaged with the enemy before he joined me.

I feel a satisfaction in stating to you at this time, these historical truths, instead of leaving them a subject of dispute after death has sealed my lips.

I remain, &c.,

(Signed) JAMES MILLER, *B. G. U. S. A.*

[No. 20.]

Secretary of War to General Izzard, 12th of August, 1814.

"The movements suggested in my letter of the 27th ult., against Kingston, rest altogether upon the presumption that Chauncey has beaten Yeo, or, at least, driven him into port, and confines him there. If, however, the enemy should carry his force from Montreal to Kingston,) and this is the shorter line of the two,) and be prepared to meet you at this point, the attack may be suspended, and another and safer movement substituted for it. This will be to embark four thousand men at Sackett's Harbor, and carry them up to the west end of the lake. United with the second division, you will be able to reduce Fort George, and what is of more importance, capture the whole of Drummond's force on the Niagara.

We have already seen, that Riall, on General Brown's approach to Fort George, withdrew his main body to Twenty-Mile creek. Drummond, when he falls back, will pursue the same policy and retire to the same place, or to Burlington Heights. To defeat this, these heights should be seized by you—a measure which will compel him to take a position at Fort George, and abide the fate of that place, or of a battle; it will also completely sever his communication with York and Kingston by land as well as by water, and thus deprive him of the resources of the neighboring country. From this point of debarkation, your movements should be made in concert with Brigadier-General Gaines, who now commands the division of the left. Commodore Chauncey will be instructed by the Secretary of the Navy on this plan of operations.

[No. 21.]

That the facts and opinions, offered by the General, in justification of his disobedience on this occasion, were wholly

unfounded, will be seen by the following letters of General Swift and Colonel Totten—the former long the senior officer of the United States engineers, the latter the present head of that scientific corps.

"In my opinion, with the force under General Izzard's command, a position in the vicinity of Rouse's Point could have been occupied, so as to control the enemy's passage through the Narrows, more effectually than from any other position. La Cole Mill formed no sufficient objection to the occupancy of this point. A battery on Cumberland Head could not have prevented the passage of an enemy's fleet into Lake Champlain, unless by some error of the naval commander, the distance of the Head to the opposite island being two miles—as measured with a chain by Lieutenant Platt of the navy, on the ice."—*Gen. Swift's Letters to Gen. Armstrong, of the 6th of August, and 27th of October*, 1838.

"There was ground enough in the rear of Rouse's Point for small works, and for such as would, with an adequate garrison, defend the position against great enterprises, or even a siege. Having no faith in the power of any works on Cumberland Head, capable of impeding or materially injuring a passing squadron, I felt bound in conscience, to state my views to the General. My opposition, though earnest, was in vain. I do not now see, and never have supposed, that there was any thing in the vicinity of La Cole Mill, or in the character of its garrison, to render the occupation of Rouse's Point hazardous to brave men."—*Col. Totten's Letter of the 6th of August*, 1838, *to Gen. Armstrong.*

[No. 22.]

Letter from Col. Elisha Jenkins to Gen. Armstrong.

"As soon as I was informed of Gen. Izzard's movement and its object, I started for Lake George, for the purpose chiefly

of endeavoring to put him on the shortest route to Sackett's Harbor; having been informed that his intention was to pass by the way of Schenectady, and thence through Utica. His reason for pursuing the southern route, was that it might have the effect of diverting an attack from New York by the British fleet hovering on the coast. I know not exactly how long Izzard remained at Fort George, it must have been three or four days at least."

Major O'Connor, deputy adjutant-general, in an official report made at the time, states, that "the army was detained at Fort George four days, on pretence of refreshing them after their long march from Plattsburgh." The General's reasons, given to the War Department, for preferring a route double the distance of that he had been directed to take, were want of funds, bad roads, and the danger of being "overtaken and devoured," in the woods by Brisbane, between Plattsburgh and Parishville—all of which were fictions. Mr. Parish offering and actually supplying funds, the roads being practicable, though not good. and no enemy being near his line of march to Parishville.

[No. 23.]

NAVY DEPARTMENT,
August 20th, 1814.

SIR: I have this instant received yours of 7, A. M., this day. I am informed by gentlemen who have frequently travelled from this to Benedict, that there is a very good and direct road of 35 miles.

Should the enemy dash for this place, he will probably take this road, unless he should follow the bank of the river

to Nottingham, with his advance guard, to drive back your flotilla, and bring up his main body by water. This will have been decided before you receive this, and you will immediately send the flotilla up to Queen Anne's, with as few men as possible, and a trusty officer to remain there, and in the event of the enemy advancing upon the flotilla in force, to destroy the whole effectually, and proceed with his men to this place.

W. JONES.

JOSHUA BARNEY, Esq., commanding U. S. flotilla.

[No. 24.]

Dr. Catlett's answer to a question of the Committee of Inquiry.

"You ask for information as to the number of the enemy. With better means of judging than any other American officer after the battle, my estimate was—at Capitol square seven hundred men; at Turnpike Hill two thousand; at Bladensburgh, wounded three hundred, attendants and guards three hundred; at the city, wounded and attendants sixty, and killed at Bladensburgh one hundred and eighty—total 3,540. These estimates, though somewhat incorrect in the detail, are corroborated in the aggregate by the best information I could get from the British surgeons, sergeants, and others left in the hospital at Bladensburgh."

The doctor's statement is fully sustained by the writer of British Campaigns in America, who states Ross's army to have been composed of four regiments only—the 4th, 21st, 44th, and 85th, one battalion of marines, and a few rocket men and artillerists—the whole amounting to 4,020 men. Deduct from this number the 500 left at Marlborough to guard the boats and plunder, (more than half of whom were sick or convalescent,) and the result will bring the assailing army to 3,500, as stated by Dr. Catlett.

[No. 25.]

Condition of the British army on and before reaching Bladensburgh.

"The men, from being so long cooped up in ships, and unused to carry their arms and baggage, had become relaxed and enervated to a degree altogether unnatural, which, added to the excessive sultriness of the weather, exceeding anything we had yet experienced, quite overpowered them. The load they carried was also far from trifling, as, beside their arms, and sixty rounds of ball-cartridge, each man bore on his back a knapsack, containing shoes, stockings, and three days' provisions, with a canteen, or wooden keg, filled with water. We remained during the night at Nottingham, nor were we as usual early in motion in the morning, and hesitation had taken place as to the course to be pursued, whether to follow the gun-boats, or to return to the shipping. At last the former was adopted, and the pursuit continued ten miles, to Marlborough. Here we became apprized that the flotilla, which had been our object, had been destroyed; a new cause of hesitation, with regard to future measures, had arisen. At length, however, orders were given to form, and at 2 o'clock, P. M., of the 23d, we quitted Marlborough, taking the road to Washington. We had proceeded about nine miles, the last four of which the sun's rays had beat continually upon us, and we had inhaled as much dust as air. Numbers of men had already fallen in the rear, and many more could, with difficulty, keep up; consequently, had we pushed on much farther, at least half the army would have been left behind. A halt was therefore ordered near a stream, nor did ever a halt come more seasonably; yet, so oppressive was the heat, that we had not resumed our march above an hour, when the waysides were again covered with stragglers, some of the finest and stoutest men in the army being unable literally to go on." —*Campaign at Washington, &c., by an officer serving in the army*, pp. 117–18.

[No. 26.]

Gordon's terms.

The town of Alexandria (with the exception of public works) shall not be destroyed, unless hostilities are commenced on the part of the Americans, nor shall the inhabitants be molested in any manner whatever, or their dwelling-houses entered, if the following articles are complied with:—

ARTICLE 1. All naval and ordnance stores (public and private) must be immediately given up.

ARTICLE 2. Possession will be immediately taken of all the shipping, and their furniture must be sent on board by the owners without delay.

ARTICLE 3. The vessels which have been sunk must be delivered up in the state they were in on the 19th of August, the day of the squadron passing the Kettle Bottoms.

ARTICLE 4. Merchandise of every description must be instantly delivered up, and to prevent any irregularities that might be committed in its embarkation, the merchants have it in their option to load the vessels generally employed for that purpose, when they will be towed off by us.

ARTICLE 5. All merchandise that has been removed from Alexandria since the 19th inst., is to be included in the above articles.

ARTICLE 6. Refreshments of every description to be supplied the ships, and paid for at the market price by bills on the British government.

ARTICLE 7. Officers will be appointed to see that the articles Nos. 2, 3, 4, and 5, are strictly complied with, and any deviation or non-compliance, on the part of the inhabitants of Alexandria, will render this treaty null and void.

JAMES A. GORDON,
Captain of his majesty's ship Sea-Horse.

"Of these articles, Nos. 3 and 5 were not enforced. No merchandise was required to be brought back to the town;

no assistance was required of, or offered by the citizens, in getting up the sunken vessels. The depredations of the enemy, with a few exceptions, were confined to flour, cotton, and tobacco, which they carried off in some of the vessels then at the town; only one vessel was burnt, no private dwelling was visited or entered in a rude or hostile manner, nor were citizens personally exposed to insult.

The loss sustained from the enemy, it is believed, will not exceed the following: Three ships, three brigs, several bay and river craft, the number of which has not been ascertained; all of which were carried away, and one ship burnt. The quantity of flour carried away, it is believed, will not exceed sixteen thousand barrels, about one thousand hogsheads of tobacco, one hundred and fifty bales of cotton, and of wine, sugar, and other articles, not more than five thousand dollars' worth."

[No. 27.]

General Young's letter to the Committee of Congress.

On the 2d of August, I received orders to fall back with my detachment, and take the most convenient position on the road from Piscatawa to Washington, to defend the approach from below to Fort Washington. This order was complied with, and here we received information of the approach of the enemy from the Patuxent toward Washington, and also the approach of the fleet coming up the Potomac, and of their having passed the Kettle Bottoms. I accordingly took a strong position on Hatton's hill, about three miles in the rear of the fort. On the 23d of August, I received information from Colonel Tayloe, of the cavalry, that he had in charge to inform me that General Smith's brigade was retreating to Washington, and the enemy pursuing rapidly, and in case we

were compelled to retreat, the Mayor of Alexandria would send every boat that could be had to the fort, or Rosier's ferry, for the purpose of transporting the troops across the river. On receipt of this letter, I addressed one to General Winder, informing him of its contents, and requested that he would give Major Tripplett, my brigade-major, orders on the subject. On the morning of the 24th, I received a message from General Winder directing me to take up my line of march, and move on the road from Piscatawa to the Eastern-branch bridge, and take a position at the cross roads; on our march, and when the brigade had advanced about three miles, Major Tripplett returned with orders from General Winder, directing the brigade to cross to the Virginia shore. Soon after the receipt of this letter we were advised of the approach of the enemy up the river above Fort Tobacco, and I was also advised that the enemy were advanced that morning to Marlborough, about five miles. I determined, in obedience of orders, to cross the Potomac to the town of Alexandria. After some part of the brigade had embarked, and left the shore, I received orders from General Armstrong, dated the 24th of August, informing me that the most the enemy did the day before was, to move about two miles beyond Marlborough, and that the ships in the Potomac had no troops, and directing me to hold my present post, until assured that the enemy was in force, and about to attack me, or until I should receive farther orders, and to keep my vedettes well posted on every road. I accordingly recalled the troops embarked, and resumed my position on the road leading to the Eastern-branch bridge, and near its junction with the road leading to Marlborough. We were at this moment apprized of the enemy's being on his march to Bladensburgh, and soon after, of the commencement of the action, which was distinctly heard. My vedettes soon returned, and gave me information of the Eastern-branch bridge being blown up, and of the retreat of our troops through Washington. I had, in this interval, despatched the trooper, who brought me General Armstrong's letter, with an answer, informing him that I had, in obedi-

ence to his orders, returned to my position back of Oxen hill, and should there wait farther orders. The trooper, with great despatch, returned and informed me that he could not see General Armstrong, but had inquired of the President and General Winder, both of whom he met with the army retreating through Washington city, and they being unable to give any information of him, General Winder despatched the same trooper back, with verbal orders for my brigade to cross the Potomac, and form a junction with his army, in Montgomery county, Maryland.

[No. 28.]

Arriving, on the retreat, at Capitol Hill, a meeting and consultation took place between the commanding General, the Secretary of State, and the Secretary of War—in which the person last mentioned, recommended a speedy occupation of the capital and adjacent houses, as a position capable of a powerful defence, and even redoubtable against a force coming as the British did, without artillery, baggage, or provision train; and, of course, meditating only a *coup de main.* The proposition was promptly, and even peremptorily rejected by the General, on two grounds—the great diminution of his morning force, and the fatigued and exhausted condition of what remained.[1] Mr. Monroe supported the opinion of the General, adding his belief, (from having seen a column of the enemy moving on the western road to the capitol,) that they would drive us into *cul de sac*, unless we took the position recommended by the General, which left open the west for

1 The General's morning force was diminished only by the retreat to Baltimore of Stanbury's brigade, and Sterret's detachment, amounting to about 2,000 men. He had of course at his disposition, not less than 3000 men. Their fatigue could only have been the result of their flight from Bladensburgh to the capitol

retreat. Finding the majority of the council two to one, and having that morning received the President's order, "*to leave to the military functionaries the discharge of their own duties, on their own responsibility,*" the Secretary of War no longer opposed the retreat to Georgetown.—*See the report by the congressional Committee of Inquiry, of the statements severally made by Messrs. Monroe, Armstrong, Rush, and Winder.*

[No. 29.]

Col. Allen McClane's Journal of the campaign.

18th of August, 1814. British fleet much increased—seen going up the bay. Call made for district militia—two brigades, Smith's and Young's, and some troops of horse.

19th. Reports of yesterday confirmed, with the addition, that the fleet had entered the Patuxent; was preparing armed boats for going up the river, and landing troops at Benedict. Accompanied General Winder to the War office. The General asked the Secretary's opinion of the enemy's object; the latter replied, that the numbers, equipments, and movements of an enemy, best indicated his objects; of these, in the present case, we know too little, to speak with any degree of assurance. With the exception of landing troops at Benedict, his great naval force, and the direction given to the movement, would indicate Baltimore; but, whether it be Baltimore, the flotilla, or Washington, our course is a plain one—assemble as large a force as we can, place it speedily at Nottingham, or other point on the Patuxent; clear the road between that and Benedict of horses and cattle, break down bridges, abbatis the route, when leading through woods; select strong points for defence, and, as soon as his movement begins, harass his front and flanks, by small attacks made by night and by day;

while Stewart operates in the same way on his rear. A plan of this kind, strictly pursued, will soon enable you to judge of the enemy's strength, equipment, and objects. If the first be small, and the second scanty, his objects cannot be great nor many—probably confined to an attack on Barney's flotilla. If, on the other hand, he shows a respectable park of artillery, with baggage and provision train, his object may be Baltimore or Washington.

20th. General Winder this day issued his proclamation, calling for militia in mass, and mustered Smith's brigade of district militia.

21st. McClane this day announced as volunteer aid to the commanding General. Smith's brigade began its march for Nottingham. Halted for the night four miles beyond the Eastern-branch bridge.

22d. General and suite followed, and arrived at the wood-yard much about the time Ross arrived at Nottingham, with a few pioneers, rocket-men, sharp-shooters, and two three-pounders, dragged by sailors. Had we moved a day sooner, or even somewhat faster, and carried with us the regulars only, we might have struck a fine blow—capturing or killing the whole of Ross's party, which did not exceed one hundred and fifty men. Joined by Col. Monroe and Col. Beal. Both had seen the British columns; the former estimating its numbers at 7,000 men, the latter at 4,000. Had these reconnoitrers confined their guesses to themselves and the General, as they ought, no harm would have been done; but they gave their opinions to every one that asked them, and their effect on the camp was bad and lasting. McClane and Col. Cross of Queen Anne's, despatched to Marlborough to inform Barney of the approach of the enemy. Found the commodore, who already knew all we could tell him—where the enemy was, his force, and his intentions, and was prepared to meet him. Instructed by a letter from the Secretary of the Navy, to destroy the boats, and join Winder with the marines and sailors. McClane got back to headquarters—found a light corps formed at last for trying the vigilance and

strength of the enemy. This corps, preceded by the General, Col. Monroe, and Laval, set out for a skirmish; but, on approaching Odin's, discovered that the enemy was also in motion. Question—what road he would take—that to Marlborough or that to Washington? Decided to watch both. The enemy soon after taking the former, the General fell back on the Battalion's Old fields. In the night, the President, Secretary of War, and Secretary of the Navy, arrived in camp.

23d. At sunrise, the General and McClane visited the President. The ordinary compliments passed; the Secretary of War asked the General for such information as he had been able to procure with regard to the numbers and equipment of the enemy: to which he replied, that Mr. Monroe and Colonel Beal, with the same means of observation, made very different estimates—the former making them 7,000 men, the latter but 4,000—that they came without cannon, cavalry, baggage or provision train—that they had a few rocket-men, and a few (two or three) guns, called grasshoppers, dragged by seamen—that their whole force, naval and military was yet at Marlborough, plundering the tobacco-warehouses—and from accounts received of the Potomac fleet, it was his opinion, that they would not move till that fleet had approached Fort Washington, when Ross would move to the rear of the fort and co-operate in taking it. Without noticing this opinion, the Secretary replied, that "the facts he had stated abundantly proved that, hitherto, Ross's movement had no object but that of covering and aiding the armed vessels destined to the attack of the flotilla; and that, should he make a movement, directed on Washington, it will necessarily be a mere Cossac hurrah, a rapid march and hasty retreat—coming, as he does, wholly unprepared for siege or investment. To meet an attack of this kind, two modes of proceeding may be suggested; the one strictly offensive, the other decidedly defensive—the former will consist of multiplied attacks, made simultaneously or in succession, on the front, flank, and rear, of an enemy's march throughout its whole extent. Such was

the well-known affair of Lexington, in the war of the Revolution, in which 1,800 of the British elite were so beaten, disheartened, and exhausted, that, had they not, at sunset, found armed vessels to protect, and an intrenched camp to receive them, not a man would have escaped capture or death. To this plan, however, serious objections may be made, arising from the subdivision of force, and multitude of commanders it makes necessary. The second, or defensive plan, is entirely free from these or any other objections of importance, and is precisely what, were I in your place, I would do. Assemble my force in his front, fall quietly back to the capitol, giving only that degree of resistance that invite a pursuit. When arrived in its front, I would immediately put in battery my twenty pieces of artillery, give the direction and management of these to Barney and Peters, fill the upper part of the house and the adjacent buildings with infantry, regulars, and militia, amounting to 5,000 men, while my 300 cavalry held themselves in reserve for a charge, the moment a recoil appeared in the British columns of attack. On the success of this plan, against the best executed coup-de-main, I would pledge both life and reputation, and earnestly recommend it to your adoption."

With this advice of the Secretary, so obviously right of itself, and represented so clearly and conclusively, the General appeared to be pleased, and, after directing Peters to feel the enemy's pickets and outposts, he set out immediately to give Stansbury's brigade a corresponding position. But failing to meet with any that pleased him, he returned, and finding that Ross was moving in force in the direction of his camp, he immediately ordered a retreat to the Eastern-branch bridge, at the same time ordering McClane to take a few dragoons and reconnoitre the road to McGruder's mill, on which it was expected that another British column was moving. No enemy was found on this road—went to Mr. Spriggs', where I found, at 10 o'clock, P. M., Messrs. Monroe, Rush, Thornton, and Charles Carroll, who immediately set out for Bladensburgh and Washington.

24th. McClane, Dr. Bird, and McConty, approached Marlborough, found a picket guard of the enemy on the bridge, part of a small corps left to cover the seamen employed in shipping tobacco, and other plunder. A fine stroke might have been made here, at daybreak, if the Secretary's plan of posting Stansbury had been executed; for, if Nourse of the navy, left in command at Marlborough, had then been attacked, it would no doubt have recalled Ross from his bivouac, six or eight miles from Marlborough, on the night of the 23d and 24th, on his route to Washington, and boats, plunder, and seamen, might all have been taken. But, unfortunately, in these first six days of campaign, there had been no fighting, to the no small encouragement of the British. McClane put himself on the enemy's right flank, had occasionally distinct views of the road by which they marched, and saw upon it many stragglers; so it continued till the enemy reached the hill on the eastern side of Bladensburg, soon after which the battle began, and soon ended by the rout of the militia. Joined General Winder on the 25th, at Montgomery Courthouse. Informed early on the 26th that Ross had evacuated the city in the preceding night in much haste, and fearing that he was marching on Annapolis, or Baltimore, he set off express for the latter, regretting much his not defending the capitol, as advised to do by the Secretary of War, as it was now plain that the attack on Washington was a mere Cossac hurrah, as General Armstrong called it.

Extract from "British campaigns at Washington."

The truth is, the capture of Washington was not the original end of the expedition. To destroy the flotilla was the sole object of the debarkation; and, but for the instigations of Admiral Cockburn, who accompanied the army, the capitol of America would have escaped our visitation.—p. 152.

SUPPLEMENTARY DOCUMENTS

ILLUSTRATING THE CAUSES OF THE INACTION OF THE ONTARIO FLEET IN THE CAMPAIGN OF 1814.

Secretary of War to the President of the United States.

WAR DEPARTMENT,
July 25th, 1814.

SIR: I send herewith a letter, received by express, from Sackett's Harbor. The information given, is important; and though without the authority of a name, knowing as I do, the hand-writing and the character of the writer, I have no hesitation in vouching for the entire credibility of the statement. I am, &c.,

(Signed) JOHN ARMSTRONG.

[*Confidential.*]

To the Secretary of War.

SACKETT'S HARBOR, *July 20th*, 1814.

SIR: Taking a warm interest in the success of the campaign and suspecting that government has not been as regularly informed of things at this post, as might be proper, I have ventured to give you the following statement of facts, which have recently taken place here; which, for more clearness and brevity, I give in the form of a journal.

8th of July. Saw the Commodore, who said he was now nearly ready, and would leave the harbor in a few days and take a station off the Ducks, to watch Yeo, if he was in Kingston.

12th. Fleet yet in port. General Gaines had a free conversation with the Commodore, who said *he should not go to the head of the lake, unless called there by Yeo's movements.*

14th. No change in the situation of the fleet, nor in the intentions of the Commodore, when he does sail. Will go to the Ducks.

15th. The Commodore sick with a fever. Expected to be able to go out in three or four days.

17th. Morgan's rifle battalion convoying a battering train sent for by General Brown, sailed yesterday in boats, supplied by the quartermaster. Their fate doubtful—our fleet being yet in the harbor (detained by something wanted for the Mohawk)—Yeo and his fleet at the *Ducks*. Commodore expects to be out by the 20th, but *will not go to the head of the lake, unless Yeo leads him there.*

20th. Morgan, with the riflemen and cannon prevented from sailing, by Yeo's *blockade of the harbor*. Expected the fleet (now ready) would break the blockade to-day. Prevented by the continued illness of the Commodore. Captain Jones would have gone out and settled the matter with Yeo, but had not authority to do so. Strange! that when the chief of a squadron is non compos, the officer next in rank is not entitled to the command. If this be a rule in the navy, it should be altered. Here was a fine opportunity of fighting and winning the long-wished-for battle; but lost, because, the only man in the fleet *not ready*, was the *commanding officer*.

Secretary of the Navy to Commodore Chauncey.

NAVY DEPARTMENT,
August 3d, 1814.

SIR: It appears by your letter of the 8th ult., that the necessary changes in the officers and crews of the squadron under your command, incidental to the absence of Captain Smith, would detain you in port a few days longer, to make final arrangements. No other cause of detention was then apprehended, or intimated, and your entire silence from that day until the 25th, when Captain Jones wrote by your desire

(as you were too unwell to do so) to say—that "the squadron has been prevented being earlier fitted for sea, in consequence of the delay in obtaining blocks and iron work," is so extraordinary and inexplicable, that, though reluctant to communicate, I cannot withhold from you the knowledge of the extreme anxiety and astonishment, which the protracted and fatal delay of the squadron in port, has excited in the mind of the President. Though entirely without information (other than rendered) of the serious indisposition with which it appears you have been afflicted, I am compelled to attribute to that cause, the detention of the squadron in port, during a period more critical and important than any that has occurred, and of which it appears you had been apprized by General Brown. The uninterrupted command of the lake during that period by the enemy, has enabled him to transport formidable reinforcements to Niagara, and nothing but the unexampled prowess and fortitude of the gallant army under General Brown, have saved it from utter destruction. These things cannot but be felt, and the questions naturally rise—why has our fleet been detained in port so late as the 25th, after the positive assurances that it would be out the first week in July? If the gallant and able commander of our squadron was rendered incapable by disease, why did not the second in command, in whom the national confidence also resides, lead it into action or scour the lake so as to prevent or intercept the transportation of the enemy, or force his fleet to battle while we have the known and decided superiority? Why was the Executive kept in ignorance of the ill state of health of the Commodore and of any real cause of detention from the 8th to the 25th of July, when, by timely notice, its orders might have provided for the contingency, and spared the flow of gallant blood, in an unequal though glorious contest? I shall not be able to answer to these interrogatories, "the squadron has been prevented being earlier fitted for sea, in consequence of the *delay in obtaining blocks* and *iron works*!"

(Signed) W. JONES.

Secretary of the Navy to Commodore S. Decatur.

NAVY DEPARTMENT,
July 28th, 1814.

SIR: The silence of Commodore Chauncey ever since the 8th instant relative to the sailing of the squadron under his command—the previous and positive assurance of his departure after the final arrangements which would be completed in a day or two; his reported sickness, and the apprehension that it might be so serious as fatally to retard the operation of the squadron and produce the most disastrous consequences; imperiously demand an immediate though eventual provision for that highly important command. You will therefore, sir, on receipt of this, without a moment's delay, proceed with the utmost celerity to Sackett's Harbor, and if the squadron shall be still in port, and Commodore Chauncey disqualified by the state of his health, for the immediate and active command of that force, take upon yourself the command, and proceed forthwith to carry into effect the designs of the campaign in that quarter. These objects I shall explain to you in general terms leaving your own judgment and discretion free to adopt such means as shall appear to you best adapted to the attainment of the end. There is no alternative between the absolute command of the lake by the capture or destruction of the enemy's squadron, before he shall have added the heavy line-of-battle-ship which he is now building, and taking shelter in port and acting on the defensive after that event. This alternative, in its ultimate consequences, approaches so near to defeat, that I can scarcely draw the distinction. If Yeo will give you battle in the present state of the two squadrons, I feel an assurance of victory. If he avoids battle and takes shelter in Kingston, it will then be desirable to blockade him with the greatest rigor and effectually shut all the avenues to the communication with the upper end of the lake by boats as well as ships, until he shall have attained the superiority by the access of his line-of-battle-ship; which Commodore Chauncey thinks

will not be before the month of October, though by the efforts he is making, and the importance of the object, I think it highly probable, he will accomplish it sooner. In either case, you will then afford the most efficient co-operation with the army of the United States that the nature of your force will admit.

The character of the war on the lakes, requires in a peculiar degree the joint operations of the naval and military means, and you will, on all occasions, with the most perfect harmony and reciprocal concert, combine with the movements of the army, all the aid and effect which the nature of your force, and the important naval objects which have been explained to you, will admit; but *you will yourself judge and determine upon the propriety and expediency of any particular mode of co-operation which may be required of you.* Of the effect of all these upon any proposed operation, nautical science, skill, and experience, can alone correctly determine. In the present state of things, it is peculiarly desirable, to afford to General Brown all the co-operation in your power. His situation is critical and becomes more so by every day's delay. His object and wishes you will ascertain from Commodore Chauncey and General Gaines.

The squadron is represented as being in the highest state of order and efficiency—officered and manned with disciplined crews not excelled by any equal number of men in any fleet; if, however, on your arrival at Sackett's Harbor and taking the command you should deem it expedient to provide against contingencies by ordering one hundred and fifty volunteers of the President, you may do so; and if the ships shall be full, they may act in the gun-boats. The President entertains the highest respect for, and confidence in, the patriotism, valor, skill, and experience of Commodore Chauncey, and desires to proceed in this business with the utmost delicacy. If the state of his health will justify his retaining the command, no change is desired; and if before you start, or on your way you should learn with certainty, that the squadron has sailed, you will consider this order as null and void. As this order

may, or may not go into effect, and as the squadron will certainty have sailed, if Commodore Chauncey's health shall have enabled him to command, I shall not write to him.

(Signed) W. JONES.

Secretary of War to the Presideut.

WAR DEPARTMENT,
July 28th, 1814.

SIR: Having been made acquainted with the instructions given to Commodore Decatur, in the event of his taking the command of the Ontario fleet, and not perceiving in them any provision for a prompt and efficient co-operation with General Brown and the army under his command, but on the contrary, a suggestion of measures, which if adopted will necessarily lead to a system of separate action, I have thought it incumbent on me to bring the subject under your special notice and consideration. In doing this, I shall state briefly the objects proposed by the Secretary—the means prescribed for their attainment—the objections to which the latter are liable, and lastly, the measures which, in my opinion, ought to be substituted for them.

The Secretary begins his letter with an opinion, that unless Yeo can be brought to a decisive action before his 80-gun ship be ready for service, our condition will so nearly approach that of positive defeat, as will make it difficult if not impossible to distinguish between them. To avoid an evil of such magnitude, he recommends the adoption and prosecution of two measures, the one, a decisive battle speedily fought with the British fleet; and the other, a rigid blockade of Kingston harbor, should the enemy decline a contest and run into that port.

That the first object, indicated by the Secretary, is the true one, will be readily conceded; but its attainment depending, as it does, on the will of the enemy, what reasonable ground of hope is there, that, unless associated with some operation

on our part, having a tendency to influence that will, the object will be attainable? Can it be believed, by any one having a competent knowledge of the past conduct of the British commander, that he who has hitherto refused to fight, but upon motives and calculations entirely his own, and who has always been able to avoid a decisive battle, when from any cause he thought proper to do so—will now accept the challenge of an enemy, obviously seeking to avail himself of a temporary superiority? In this view of the subject, the supposition is wholly unwarranted, and becomes a positive absurdity, when, as acknowledged by the Secretary, the exercise of a small degree of patience, will enable him to appear on the lake so re-inforced, as will compel his adversary to a speedy flight into Sackett's Harbor.

If such be the necessary or probable issue of the Secretary's first measure, having an object altogether proper, what can be said of the second, which fails alike in purpose and efficiency? Has the Secretary forgotten, that, from physical causes over which the power and policy of belligerants have no control, a rigid blockade of Kingston harbor is utterly impossible? On this point, it may be sufficient to refer to an opinion given by Commodore Chauncey to Gen. Wilkinson, who, in 1813, was desirous of penning up Yeo and his squadron in Amherst bay. "My best endeavors," says the Commodore, "shall be used to keep the enemy in check at this part of the lake, yet with my utmost exertions and greatest vigilance, he may slip past me in the night, when favored with a westwardly wind; and get eighteen or twenty hours start of me down the lake," an opinion, entirely verified by the event, and applicable to any new attempt at blockading either a western or northern port of this inland sea.

But admitting that this were otherwise, and that a rigid blockade of Kingston was as practicable as the Secretary supposed it to be, what will be its necessary effect? to keep our army in a state of comparative inaction on the western end of the lake—while on its eastern extremity our fleet will substantially consummate Yeo's policy; by keeping him and his squadron out of harm's way, till his new ship is ready for

service. In what sense, therefore, can a measure having such effects, be considered as one of *efficient co-operation* with the army?

It now but remains, that I should indicate the measures which, in my opinion, ought to be substituted for those recommended by my colleague. They are few and as follows: that the fleet sail promptly from Sackett's Harbor, with an express destination to the western end of the lake; that when arrived there, it enter at once into a free and full co-operation with the army; which, when increased by the junction of Izzard's column, will muster not less than seven thousand combatants, a force entirely competent to a full execution of the general plan of campaign. Both fleet and army will then be in their true positions—the one, cutting off all communication by land between the British peninsular posts and their base—the other, performing a similar service, by intercepting supplies sent from Kingston by water—a state of things, making it the duty of Drummond to call loudly and peremptorily for the interposition of Yeo and the British fleet: which, if refused, will give our arms the glory of another Burgoynade—and if yielded, will necessarily produce that decisive naval battle, so important in itself, and so much desired by my colleague.

All which is most respectfully submitted.

(Signed) JOHN ARMSTRONG.

President of the United States.

The result of the preceding correspondence was, a refusal by Decatur to direct the service proposed to him; a continuance of Chauncey in the command of the fleet; an adherance, on his part, to a system of separate action, and a direct refusal to co-operate with the army at the head of the lake: the consequences of all which were, that Yeo, refusing to be blockaded in Kingston harb[illegible] four ships with supplies to Drummond, all of whic[illegible] rr[illegible] fely, and without meeting an enemy, and so ex[illegible] d [illegible] 's fears, as caused the hasty and disgraceful retre[illegible] by him from Canada.

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T. B. M. Mason.